Commentary

Volume Seventy, Number Five, November 1980

American Power & the Persian Gulf

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The Rise and Fall of Yiddish

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Turnabout in the Senate

Joshua Muravchik

The Posthumous Victory of Albert Camus

Stephen Miller

Joseph and His Brothers

Robert Alter

Music: Mehta's Philharmonic

Samuel Lipman

Books:

Charles Horner/Julius Weinberg/
Terry Eastland/Joshua Rubenstein/
Herman Belz

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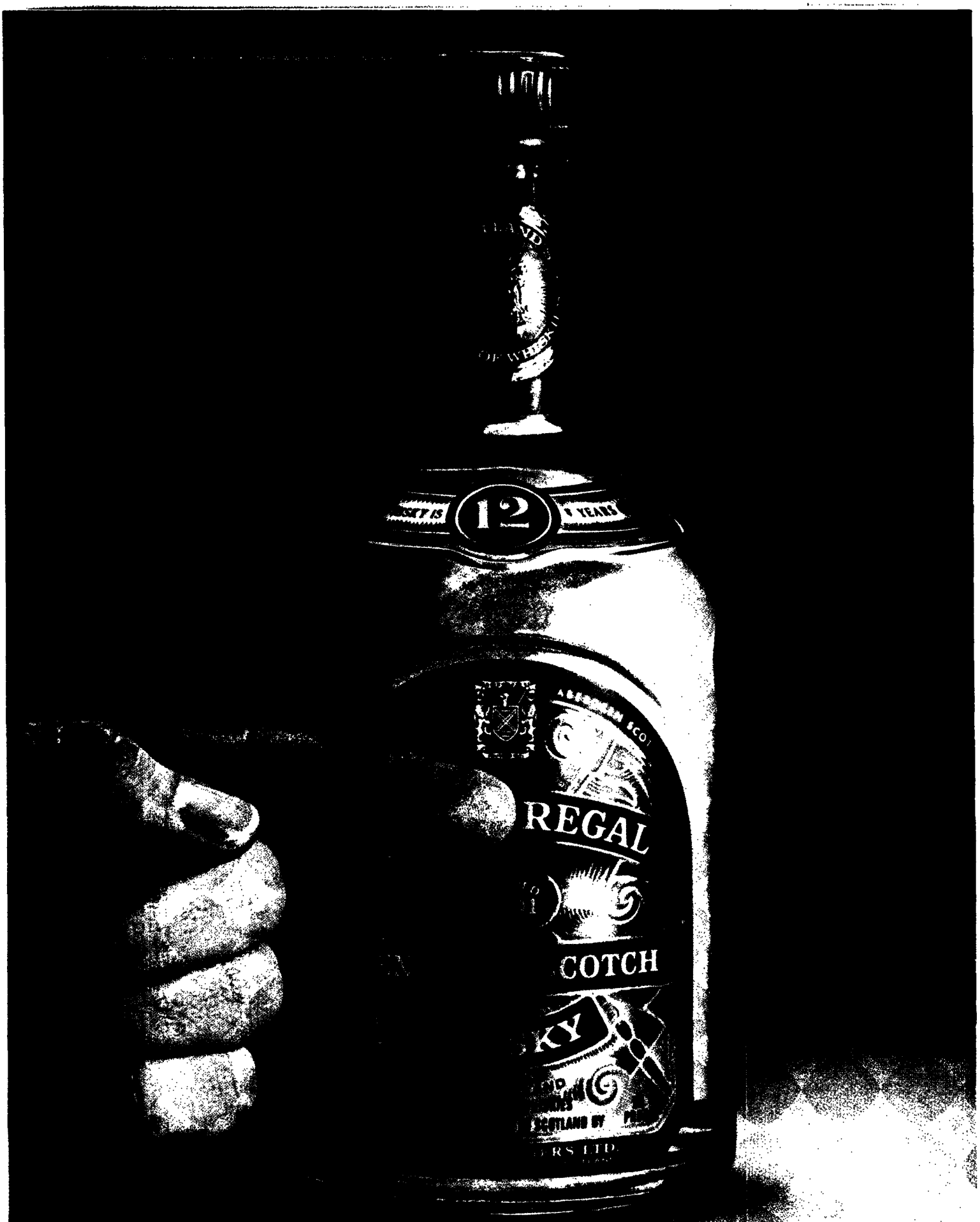

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Commentary

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Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.50, $24 a year; 3 years $64; 5 years $96—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Publication Number ISSN 0010-2601
EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

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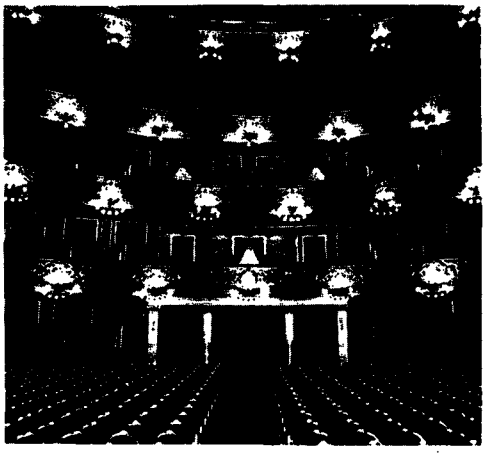
Buenos Aires: 400 Years Young.



One of the world's great cities is celebrating its 400th birthday this year: Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina.

And many of the world's great have come to help celebrate—including Queen Sophia of Spain . . . President Joao Baptista Figueiredo of Brazil . . . Mayor Maurice Ferre of Miami . . . Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles . . . Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony Orchestra . . . Zubin Mehta and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Israel . . . and countless others.

Looking at metropolitan Buenos Aires today, with its nine million inhabitants, soaring skyscrapers, busy factories, bustling airports, crowded theaters and modern hospitals, it is difficult to imagine its birth in 1580 as a tiny village of barely 200 people on an unknown river thousands of miles from civilization.

For nearly 200 years, the town slept until in 1776 the viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata was created with its seat in Buenos Aires.

Between 1860 and the First World War, European immigrants arrived by the hundreds of thousands, swelling the city's population. In 1905, it was one million; in 1927, it was two million; in 1947, it was nearly 4.7 million, making it the largest Spanish-speaking city in the world.

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Letters from Readers

American Jews & Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse's " 'Peace Now' & American Jews" [August] is a breath of fresh air. . . . Mrs. Wisse should be commended for the remarkable restraint with which she marshals the outrageous facts. But while this makes her article effective, I am dismayed, dumbfounded, and deeply worried about the absence of rage among the Jewish public in general. Though the "Peace Now" advocates in this country include many well-meaning supporters of Israel as well as others who may be labeled with that expressive Spanish equivalent for fellow travelers, *tontos utiles* (useful fools), there are also some self-hating and Israel-hating Jews among them who in any other context would be called Quislings. Yet there has been no outcry. Not when "Peace Now" charter member Shulamit Koenig said, speaking at Oberlin College, that "to ask the PLO to repudiate [its] covenant is no less absurd than to ask Begin to dismiss the Bible." . . . To take another example: in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, a woman told me, with tears in her eyes, that she had gone to a discussion on the Middle East at a nearby university where Jewish and Arab speakers were to participate. "The Jews," she said, "were more vitriolically anti-Israel than the Arabs."

Since I travel the length and breadth of this country and meet Jewish audiences, I know how thin a slice of Jewish public opinion the "dissenters" represent. But people are cowed by the array of academics, Nobel laureates, rabbis, and "leaders" who are astutely manipulated into signing what they naively believe to be "calls to conscience" which are, invariably, publicized as political polemics against the government of Israel. . . .

What are the risks run by these "dissenting" American Jews? Leonard Fein could carry his campaign to unseat Prime Minister Begin into the lion's den and say in Tel Aviv that Begin had "lied" to his people and that he was a "disaster." What happened to Fein? Was he lynched, mobbed, arrested, expelled? Nothing happened, of course. On the contrary, far from becoming a martyr, he managed to receive a great deal of publicity as the guru of the "dissenters." . . .

There is an added irony. This "dissent" is aimed at a government abroad. Yet at home it fits neatly into the administration's policy aims. On repeated occasions, but as early as 1977, President Carter, when asked what would happen if the Israeli position were different from his, answered: "I would try to marshal . . . the constituencies that might exist in our own country" (*Time*, August 8, 1977). It is obvious what constituencies the President had in mind. The pressure of a packaged "American Jewish public opinion," which the American Friends of "Peace Now" bring to bear not only on the government of Israel but also on American public opinion, fits exactly into this presidential prescription. What then is this so-called "dissent" if not subservience to current American policy aims that are fashioned more out of concern for Arab oil than for Israel's survival?

As a matter of fact, "Peace Now" would settle for even less than Washington. While the American formula for a comprehensive peace still pays lip-service to a secure Israel behind defensible borders, a recent pamphlet distributed by "Peace Now" in the United States notes that the term " 'defensible borders' is meaningless," since "peace can secure borders better than any borders can secure peace." With the exception of the Communists, no Israeli party has come out in favor of surrendering East Jerusalem, yet the pamphlet is mum on this subject. But it reiterates that "religious and historical considerations should play no role" in the peace negotiations. In other words, Jerusalem is expendable, too. . . .

If the present agitation in favor of "Peace Now" in this country has any other meaning but sending signals to the White House and the State Department, . . . it can only be to abbreviate the life-span of the present Israeli government and to accelerate the return of Labor to power—although, ironically, a Labor government would not satisfy the demands of "Peace Now" either. This is, of course, an open interference of American citizens in Israeli domestic affairs that goes beyond the controversy about the Diaspora's right to criticize Israeli policies. . . .

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Ruth R. Wisse has placed us all in her debt, not only for the luminous intelligence and surgical precision with which she has cut through the nauseating cant of the American Friends of "Peace Now," but also for proving that even among Jewish academics it is possible to find an example of the courage to dissent from what Lionel Trilling used to call "the conformity of dissent." This conformity exists because to be regarded in academic circles today as a supporter of Israel—without any ifs, ands, or buts—is tantamount to entering the faculty lounge diffusing an unpleasant odor. And what are the terrors of the PLO when weighed against the terrors of academic ostracism?

Mrs. Wisse correctly finds something comic in the insistence of all the Jewish critics of Israel on how courageous they are in dissenting from the Jewish community. In fact, of course, nothing is easier than to dissent from the hounded, beleaguered, and powerless Jewish people, just as nothing requires more fortitude than to dissent from the anti-Israel cabal now made up of the UN, the State Department, the USSR, the Socialist International, the terrorist international, and all the nations that thirst for oil rather more than they do for righteousness.

Although Mrs. Wisse stresses the extent to which Diaspora Jews of the leftist persuasion have been meddling in Israel's internal affairs, she does not comment on the extent to which "Peace Now" Israelis, following in the footsteps of more extreme groups like New Outlook, have taken it upon themselves brazenly to tell American Jews how to run *their* affairs. Rael Jean and Erich Isaac, in their indispensable pamphlet entitled "The Americanization of 'Peace Now,'" have demonstrated in chilling detail how "'Peace Now' has come to tell American Jews . . . that they stand between Israel and peace." The Isaacs show how "Peace Now" has become intricately involved with the most ferocious American enemies of Israel, including a host of PLO front groups, and how readily, if unwittingly, its representatives have let themselves be manipulated by radicals for whom the great desideratum is the reduction of Israel to sandy wastes. The Isaacs also provide a full account of how . . . "Peace Now" emissaries have carried the saga of their bleeding hearts from New York to Seattle, constantly bewailing the political support given to Israel by American Jews through pressure on our elected representatives. Although they are unlikely to achieve their aim of (in the words of Mattityahu Peled) "destroying the American Jewish establishment," their fulminations against Israel's policies have been meat and drink to such anti-Israel diehards as Senators Stevenson and Hatfield, who now fling them in the face of American Jews opposing their efforts to cut off economic and military aid to Israel.

If Narcissus can lift his eyes from the pool long enough to answer a question, I would like to ask the organizers of anti-Begin petitions and letters like Leonard Fein and the arrangers of evenings in *shul* with the PLO like Milton Viorst: do you really believe that you have been taken up with alacrity by the media because of the trenchant force of your arguments and the elegance of your prose, or because your antics converge so beautifully with the designs of Amalek, Edom, and Ishmael?

Edward Alexander
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

To the Editor of Commentary:

Ruth R. Wisse explains, I think correctly, that the position of "Peace Now" is even less favorable toward Israel than the present U.S. administration. Also, Mrs. Wisse notes that "Peace Now," striving to formulate American Jewish opinion in the guise of merely reflecting opinion already formed, works to impose its views upon the democratically elected government of Israel via the instrument of the U.S. government. Both of these purposes "Peace Now" embraces in the interests of "democracy" in Israel and in the Jewish community here. Finally, Mrs. Wisse points to the efforts of "Peace Now" in this country to appear apolitical, Zionist, and a mere extension of an indigenous movement in Israel. These efforts she describes, with somewhat excessive generosity, as "either inadvertently or deliberately misleading." . . . But while Mrs. Wisse's assessment is not false, it is at once overly slim as to the facts and too timid regarding their import.

"Peace Now" is a transparent attempt to resurrect the discredited Breira, a group staffed, supported, and funded by the enemies, Jewish and other, of Israel. Originally "Peace Now" was an Israeli movement. Although the goal of its activist core of leftist and PLO sympathizers is an Arab state in Judea, Samaria, and East Jerusalem, this goal could not be avowed in Israel if the movement were to have mass appeal. "Peace Now" sought to implement its purpose, or rather to have the American government implement its purpose, by destroying the support of American Jews for Israel and by insisting that it was American Jews who prevented peace. . . .

In truth "Peace Now" is the present redoubt of the anti-Jewish Left, much of which is predictably Jewish. For example, "Peace Now" was implicated in the now infamous New Outlook conference of 1979. All Israeli parties, except the frankly Communist ones, urged their supporters to avoid the New Outlook conference. . . .

The debasement that is "Peace Now" is not only that it is a betrayal of the Jewish people in the traditions of Jewish leftism, but that this betrayal, though its dominant impulse is visibly the reverse of bravery, is sold to those whom it betrays as daring and brave dissent. Worst of all, the Jewish establishment, implicated in the betrayal, has neither the courage to expose "Peace Now" nor the decency to keep quiet.

Robert J. Loewenberg
Phoenix, Arizona

To the Editor of Commentary:

Hurrah for Ruth R. Wisse's attack on the effort to create an American version of Israel's "Peace Now" movement. While the Israeli movement has a number of adherents, its American counterpart really constitutes a public-relations effort by a mere handful of elitists who, for various reasons, wish to undermine the Israeli government.

This effort has an insidious side, for in affirming truisms ("Israeli security requires normalization of relations between Israel and its neighbors") and speaking in a tone of sweet reasonableness, the American Friends of "Peace Now" reinforce the view that Israel is recalcitrant, unyielding, and the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East—indeed, in the world.

Jewish attacks on Israeli settlement policy inevitably lend credence to the erroneous view that the Jews, like the Arabs, have their extremists. The notion that a group

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like Gush Emunim, whose extremism involves settling barren lands, is more threatening to peace than are murderous terrorists, gains currency with each New York *Times* airing of a "Peace Now" declaration. . . .

CHARLES EVANS
East Hampton, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was pleased to read Ruth R. Wisse's article and find the first exposure in a Jewish magazine of the harm that the American Friends of "Peace Now" is doing to Israel. But I was also disappointed that the article left out so much—left out indeed all the information provided in the definitive study, "The Americanization of Peace Now," by Rael Jean and Erich Isaac (published by Americans for a Safe Israel). . . .

Mrs. Wisse seems to separate "Peace Now" into two categories: in Israel (fine, Israelis are entitled to feel and act as they wish) and here (where she criticizes the group's supporters). But this is to overlook what the Isaacs show so clearly is the effort by "Peace Now" in Israel to encourage support in the United States, the belief of the movement that American Jews are the key to achieving its aims. Equally serious, ignoring the Isaacs' study, Mrs. Wisse fails to make any mention of the way in which "Peace Now," its Israeli representatives who come here, and its American supporters have cooperated with those with a long and clear history of hostility to Israel, from the contingent at the Institute for Policy Studies to the American Friends Service Committee. Mrs. Wisse tells only half the story; that is a pity, for the full story needs to be told.

HADASSAH K. MARCUS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse, in support of her contention that the American Jewish community is not monolithic in its views, states: "The American Jewish communities—for no two are alike—are ridden with factionalism and dissension on every conceivable point." Unfortunately, to buttress this position, she says in the very next sentence that "The issue of American support for Soviet Jews is debated with bloody intensity and great moral anguish." To the reader not involved in the movement to gain the right of emigration for Soviet Jews from the Soviet Union, the impression is given that many American Jews do not support such a movement. But American Jews are virtually unanimous in their support of such a movement. Few issues on the American Jewish agenda have received such a broad base of support. Mrs. Wisse undoubtedly is referring to the question of aid for those Jews who settle in the United States rather than in Israel. This is an entirely different matter and should have been so delineated by Mrs. Wisse.

MERVIN RISEMAN
Chairman, Greater New York
Conference on Soviet Jewry
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse's article deals, roughly speaking, with two subjects. The first is a concern with the wisdom of the actions taken by the American Friends of "Peace Now." That subject has already been debated at great length by many in the American Jewish community . . . and there is no point in trying to discuss it further.

The last part of Mrs. Wisse's article, however, deals with the unspoken compact that American Jews will not publicly criticize Israeli policy. . . . The question now facing the American Jewish community is whether or not events compel a reexamination of this compact. . . .

Many American Jews feel that some policies of the Israeli government are so potentially dangerous to the future of Israel that they must speak out. . . .

Many Israelis actively urge American Jews to take certain political positions. Are we to take only those positions which Israelis advocate, or do we have the right to make up our own minds?

Frequently, Israeli speakers, either members of the government or well-known persons, appear at public or semi-public meetings in the United States. In the past year many have come and spoken in defense of the policies of the Begin government. The typical Jewish audience listens respectfully; people ask relatively innocuous questions or perhaps there are no questions. The speaker then goes home to Israel and reports that members of the American Jewish community support the policies which he discussed. What actually happens is that some in the audience agree with the speaker and those who do not agree remain silent; the speaker is thus misled into believing that silence is the equivalent of consent and approval. . . . No consideration is given by the Israeli to the effect of the compact which dictates "no public criticism."

I submit that the time is right for a review and reexamination of the relationship of the state of Israel and the Jewish communities in the Diaspora. The American Friends of "Peace Now" may be doing the state of Israel a favor by speaking out publicly.

ROBERT KELBER
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an American Jew concerned about Israel, I am sympathetic with the anguish that motivated Ruth R. Wisse to attack the 90 well-known American Jews who signed the advertisement opposing further settlements on the West Bank. She is correct in asserting that public criticism of Israeli policy by American Jews exposes Israel to danger at a time when the international community, subservient to Arab economic pressures, has isolated the Jewish state and supported the Arabs. The identification of prominent American Jews with a public anti-Israel position is an ominous and disconcerting development. Mrs. Wisse is right in questioning the judgment of those who signed the ad. But she is very wrong in not acknowledging the danger to Israel that the settlement policy poses.

Israel's survival depends on the continuing support of the United States. The Israelis can afford to lose the backing of the world only as long as they continue to receive U.S. support, which has been based on a historic consensus that Israel's cause is just and that its policy is motivated by considerations of survival. Begin's West Bank settlement policies are not motivated by considerations of Israeli survival. They are based on the doctrinaire, insensitive convictions that Jews have a just claim to the ancient land of Judea and Samaria. These claims have already precariously eroded the vital support of the press and the intellectuals—important elements of American public opinion. More threatening, a perceptible change in the image of Israel held by the average American may be taking place at the grass-roots level here.

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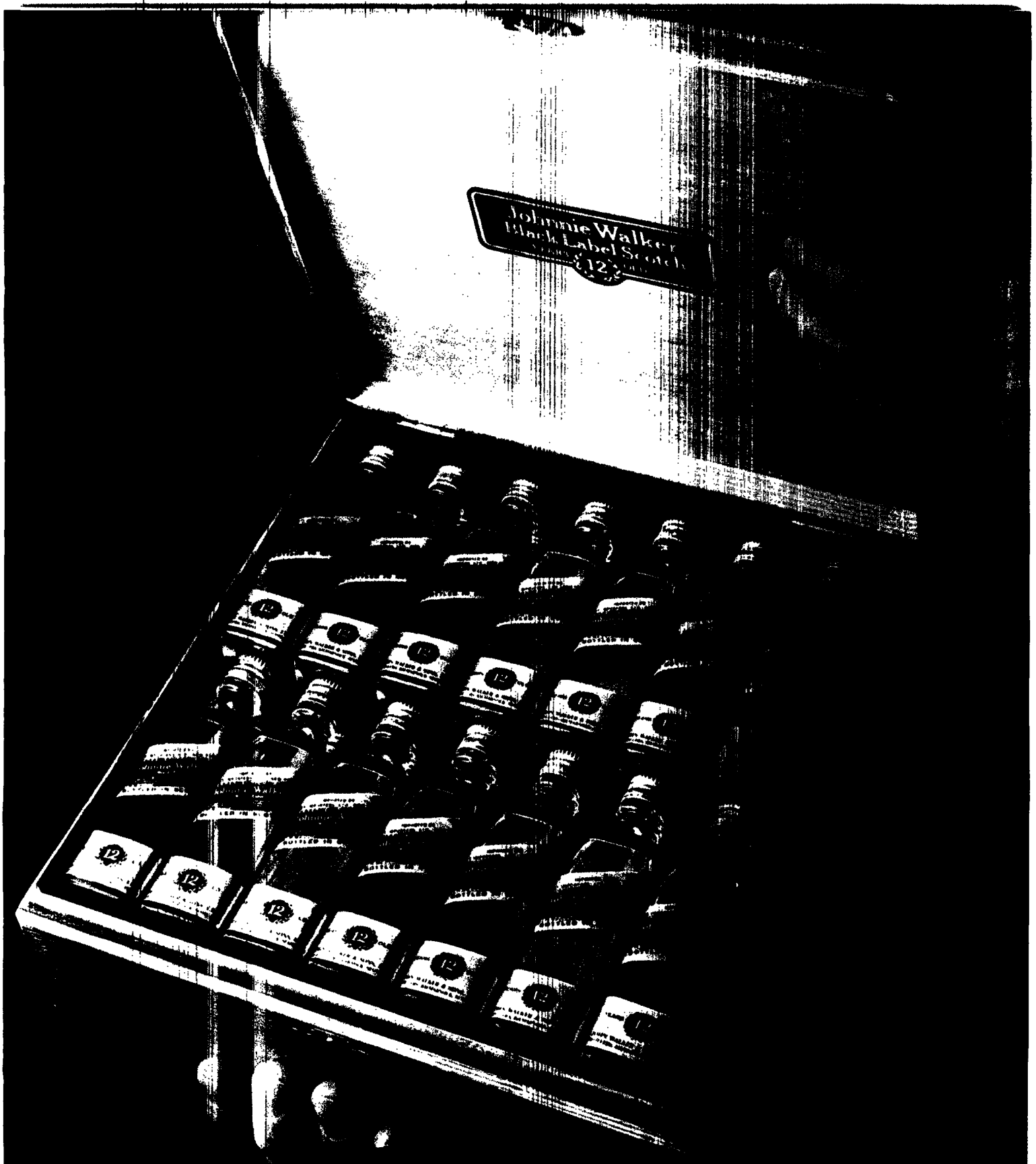

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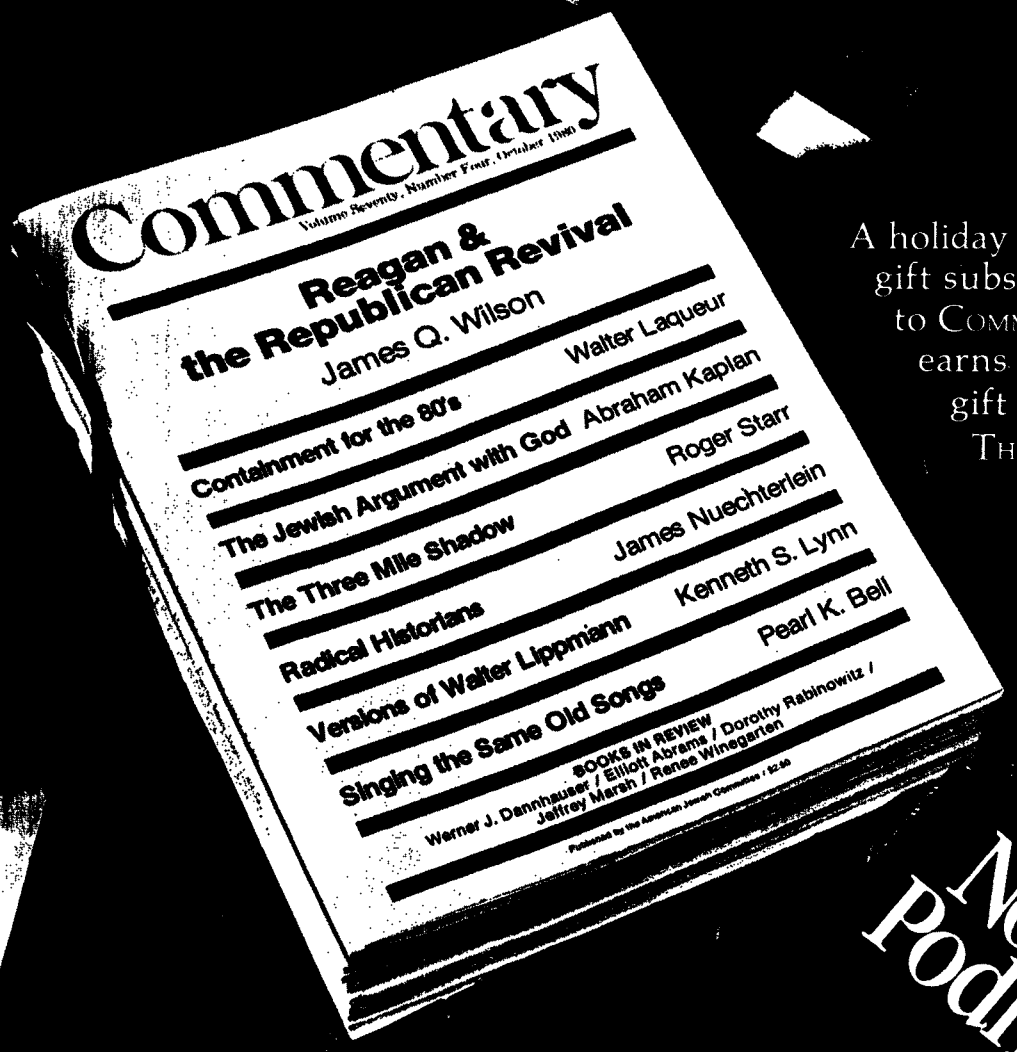

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This brings us to the anguish of the Americans who signed the ad. As American Jews, they are deeply concerned that the continuation of Begin's West Bank policy may soon do irreparable damage to American support for Israel. By speaking out, they hoped to get Begin's attention and to discourage him from pursuing his dangerous policies. But in doing so, they also allowed themselves to be identified with the growing opposition to Israeli policies here. . . .

Although I am sympathetic with her concern, the issue is more complex than Mrs. Wisse's treatment. . . .

MARK R. BERNSTEIN
Charlotte, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her attack on American critics of Israel, Ruth R. Wisse shows little understanding of Israeli political realities. This fact is particularly evident in her comments on the West Bank settlements.

Mrs. Wisse faults the American supporters of "Peace Now" for exaggerating the importance of the settlements. She offers the familiar argument that Begin's willingness to return the Sinai indicates that settlements on the West Bank need not be an obstacle to peace. The problem with this line of reasoning is that Begin and the Revisionists have never attached great importance to the Sinai, which is not part of the historic land of Israel. Judea and Samaria, on the other hand, have always been seen as part of Israel's biblical heritage and as an integral part of the Jewish state. Though the agreements at Camp David left the question of the West Bank's ultimate status ambiguous, Begin has since made it clear how his government interprets the accords. He has proclaimed innumerable times, publicly and privately, at home and abroad, that Israel will never relinquish sovereignty over the West Bank. This view has been echoed by all of his closest advisers and by the major officials in his government. Occasional statements that "everything is negotiable" cannot obscure the unmistakable thrust of Begin's policy. When seen against this background, the establishment of the West Bank settlements is indeed an obstacle to peace, and there is no reason why American Jews should not plainly say so.

Mrs. Wisse is apparently playing a game that we Jews bitterly decry when the Arabs indulge in it. We all know that the PLO is committed to the destruction of Israel, a position which it endlessly reiterates. On those occasions when there are vague rumblings about the emergence of "moderation" in the PLO, Jewish leaders rightly condemn the gullibility of those who are inclined to listen. The Jewish community points out that we cannot patronize the Arabs; we must judge them on the basis of their record and their actions, and we must assume that they mean what they publicly state. Yet it seems that we are not prepared to apply these same standards to the government of Israel. Mr. Begin is nothing if not consistent, and his views on the West Bank have not changed in forty years. Can we honestly pretend that he does not mean what he says? The American Friends of "Peace Now" have refused to engage in this charade.

Mrs. Wisse warns us against those Jews who suggest that the Jews themselves are to blame for every misfortune that befalls them. Yet equally dangerous are those Jews who allow the hostility of our enemies to distract us from our own very real mistakes.

ERIC H. YOFFIE
University City, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse continues the smear campaign against "Peace Now" with student rhetoric and with a cast of easily disposed-of straw men.

"Peace Now" was formed in March 1978 as a pressure group to combat negative influences on the peace process brought about by Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. It never intended to influence the PLO, the Palestinians, Jordan, or the Rejectionists because it is powerless to influence them directly. "Peace Now," of which I am a member, is aware of the intransigence of the other side but at the moment is counting only on Sadat and Egypt. Thus while we deplore such things as the Damascus declarations and the Venice declaration, we see the latter partly as a response to the Begin government and expedient in the new climate of public opinion that Begin has managed to create.

I personally see two interrelated problems at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. First, the refusal of the Arabs (except for Egypt) to recognize the right of Israel to exist and, second, the foreign military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The second problem came about as a result of the first, and it will not be solved until the first is solved, but a solution to the second problem is necessary for the solution of the first. In other words, unless Israel offers the Arabs an acceptable compromise, either territorial or functional, for the West Bank and Gaza, there cannot be lasting peace even with those Arabs ready to recognize Israel's right to exist. Continual new Jewish settlement, personal autonomy divorced from autonomy of the territory and water rights, are unacceptable to any Palestinians, to Sadat, to the United States, to the EEC, and to the world.

Sadat and Begin have been playing the same game of intransigence, of negotiation through declaration, and of denouncing the other side's shortcomings without dealing with one's own. Unfortunately for Israel, Sadat is much better at this game than is Begin and he has a much better hand to play it with. Unless Israel wants to see all American support dry up and see the United States continue to abstain from or even vote for UN resolutions condemning Israel, Begin must change his policies or Israel must change its government.

As one who has been an active supporter of Israel for a number of years, . . . I have never urged that the American government use political or economic pressure to force the Begin (or any other Israeli) government to adopt different policies. To my knowledge no one in "Peace Now" or the American Friends of "Peace Now" has ever adopted this position. . . . The Madison, Wisconsin, chapter of the American Friends of "Peace Now," which according to Janet Aviad in Jerusalem is the most active branch in the United States, has restricted its activities solely to Jewish groups and has not attempted to influence the press or Gentile opinion, let alone policy-makers. The Madison chapter is, I am sure, typical of all American Friends of "Peace Now" nationwide.

The Palestinian charter by which the PLO sets its course does not demand much morally. The Israeli declaration of independence does, and we are only trying to see that Israel lives up to its ideals, especially when to do so is the pragmatic and far-sighted course.

THOMAS MITCHELL
Madison, Wisconsin

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The trouble with Ruth R. Wisse's article is that she relates the wrong tale of Chelm. Mrs. Wisse draws the moral that the American supporters of the Israeli group "Peace Now" are like the rabbi in Peretz's cautionary tale: shamefully frightened in a world of powerful *goyim* and fearful of Jews' expressing their own legitimate demands for existence.

But there is nothing in the statement released by the American Friends of "Peace Now" or in the private histories of those who signed the statement which supports such an interpretation of their attitude. To quote Peretz's caustic tale in this context is to calumniate the Jewish self-respect of the signers and not confront the sober political and moral statement they are advancing.

Incidentally, Peretz's simply but shrewdly paced tale, with its corrosive undertones, is as much an attack on naive religiosity and inadequate pious adjustment to a corrupt world as an attack on Jewish socialists and other idealists of the day who rationalized pogroms against Jews.

The tale that Mrs. Wisse should have related is the one about the Chelmites who wander from town to town collecting funds for a new bathhouse since the old one had burned down. Fearful of being robbed by brigands of the funds they have managed to collect as they return home, even fearful of having their wagons stolen from them if they were to invest the money in merchandise, the clever Chelmites decide to invest the money in feathers which when sent aloft will follow them in the sky back to Chelm, secure from theft. Arriving home, the Chelmites never see the feathers again, even after the rest of the town sends forth its own feathers in order to direct the other feathers to Chelm as they wander around the skies, probably lost. Chelm that year had neither featherbeds nor bathhouse.

Moral: even when suspicion and precaution are justified, and one should protect one's legitimate investments, one shouldn't become captive to an absurd logic dictating a chain of unwise and self-destructive acts.

RICHARD J. FEIN
Coordinator, Jewish Studies Program
SUNY, New Paltz
New Paltz, New York

RUTH R. WISSE writes:

The letters of Robert Kelber and Mark R. Bernstein represent a fair sample of the American Jewish thinking that prompted my article. These are "moderate" Jews, willing to grant that "public criticism of Israeli policy by American Jews exposes Israel to danger at a time when the international community, subservient to Arab . . . pressures, has isolated the Jewish state. . . ." But being so moderate, they also appreciate the "anguish" of those who see in Begin's West Bank policy a danger to peace. If one cannot do anything about the greater international danger, one can at least acknowledge the danger that the settlement policy poses.

The equation of the international danger posed by the Arabs with the putative danger of Begin's policy in Judea and Samaria is so pernicious in itself that any political action based upon such an equation must be as pernicious as the assumption on which it rests. The denial of peace originates in the refusal of the Arab states—now excepting Egypt—to accept the presence of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state: it precedes and supersedes all other "dangers." Anyone familiar with the history of the Middle East, as Eric H. Yoffie clearly is not, knows that the Begin government came to power in Israel only after thirty years of a frustrated Israeli quest for peace, beginning with the Jewish acceptance and the Arab repudiation of partition in 1947. The Revisionist formula was not then the stumbling block to peace, as it was not in the almost thirty years of uninterrupted Labor rule which followed. The Arabs have consistently refused Israel a place in the community of nations, and have used all the economic and political and propaganda power at their command to win the war they have so far lost militarily. The blame they place on Begin's West Bank policy as the obstacle to peace is only a current strategy in, not a cause of, this ongoing war.

The nations of the world, including an ever-growing part of the West, have their own craven reasons for shrinking from this clear statement of historical fact. They pretend to even-handedness when they equate the Arab war against the Jewish state with the current Israeli response to that unyielding Arab policy of annihilation. The acceptance by American Jews of this cynical and thoroughly false equation—when they should be opposing it with every ounce of political acumen and pressure at their command—is, as I suggested in my article, a sign of Jewish demoralization. It is a return to the Diaspora politics of apologetics and self-flagellation and fear that characterized much of modern Jewish expression between 1897 and 1947.

In the realm of politics, I am not concerned with "anguish," either mine or anyone else's. American Jews should be expected to assess the probable and predictable results of their words and actions *before* they speak and act. They should also have the dignity to hold themselves responsible for the probable and predictable consequences. If American Jews wish to weaken the position of Israel even further, it is, of course, fully within their democratic privilege to do so. But it is repugnant when they claim their attack on the freely elected government of the Jewish state is really "intended" to serve Israel's best interest.

Those readers—and to judge by a number of the letters printed above, there were quite a few of them—who feel that I was *too* moderate in my assessment of the forces at work in "Peace Now" will find corroboration of their criticism in the letter of Thomas Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell's letter, incidentally, is the only response to COMMENTARY from within the ranks of "Peace Now." But since it is not as carefully manicured as the published document of the group, it may be a purer example of the thinking of the membership.

The most telltale sign of Mr. Mitchell's real political affiliation comes in his initial protest against the "smear campaign" launched against "Peace Now." (Many other readers of my article have complained that, far from smearing, I left, alas, not even a smudge.) Nothing is more characteristic of neoleftists on this continent than their cry of "smear" when they are being fairly opposed for the political positions they voice. This tactic of self-righteous innocence sullies both their opponents and the political process itself.

I wonder how characteristic Mr. Mitchell's statements are of the 90 public sponsors of the American Friends of "Peace Now." Do they also see the Venice declaration as a response to the public opinion that "Begin has managed to create"? Do they also equate the refusal of the

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Arabs to recognize Israel's right to exist with Israel's "military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip"? Do they also, by Mr. Mitchell's magical logic, conclude that if problem number one created problem number two, the solution of problem number two is necessary for the solution of problem number one?

I would like to draw particular attention to Mr. Mitchell's conclusion because it would be hard to find a more perfect example of Jewish aggression against Israel masked in the rhetoric of brotherly concern:

> The Palestinian charter by which the PLO sets its course does not demand much morally. The Israeli declaration of independence does, and we are only trying to see that Israel lives up to its ideals. . . .

When Mr. Mitchell says that the Palestinian charter "does not demand much morally," he is saying that there is no appeal to human conscience against the calculated policy of murder that characterizes the PLO. The logical consequence of such a perception would be a call for extraordinary vigilance. One cannot always trust well-wishers, but if your enemy is by his own admission dedicated to your extinction, you should at least put up your fiercest guard against him. But Mr. Mitchell's casual expression ("does not demand much morally") is the objective correlative of his level of concern for the consequences of the PLO's moral laxity. Being first and foremost a moralist, he is less interested in Israel's right to live than in Israel's right to live in the world to come.

If Israel's declaration of independence is, as Mr. Mitchell contends, a higher expression of morality than the PLO charter, then by any sane standard Israel is that much more deserving of confidence and the PLO that much less worthy of trust. A society with at least an aspiration to morality can be expected to try to live up to its ideals better than one that has no ideals in the first place. Mr. Mitchell, however, would rather deal with gentlemen than with murderers, and unlike the Israelis, as an American Jew he has that choice. Since a society with articulated ideals will always fall short of them in some measure, American Jews like Mr. Mitchell will always have their work cut out for them, keeping Israel honest. Until now, funds solicited for Israel have been concerned with the welfare of its body. The spiritualists of the American Friends of "Peace Now" are turning their attention to Israel's soul.

Richard J. Fein has missed the point of Peretz, and even of his own little anecdote. The Chelmites were foolish to invest their money in feathers. It is to escape the fate of the Chelmites that the Israelis have put some of their trust in the same commodities that all other nation states respect. But there are Diaspora Jews who apparently feel more comfortable with feathers.

Israel/Czechoslovakia

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article, "Czechoslovakia 1938—Israel 1980" [August], Steven Plaut writes that the Czechoslovak state, like Israel, was a country recreated hundreds of years after it had been destroyed, that Czechoslovakia had been an independent country until 1620 when it was conquered by Austria and recreated as a result of the collapse of the Hapsburg empire.

Bohemia was a kingdom whose throne was ascended to by a Hapsburg in 1526. In 1618 the Czech Protestant nobility attempted to overthrow the rule of the Catholic Hapsburgs. The Hapsburgs achieved a decisive military victory at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620. Systematic repression of Czech national life followed. As the Czechs were subjected to Germanization, the Slovaks were subjected to Magyarization. Slovakia was part of Hungary until 1918. While Thomas Masaryk worked for Czech independence, Father Andrej Hlinka was striving for Slovakian independence. He was opposed to a centralized Czechoslovak state. Consequently, the new state, which also included large numbers of non-Czech and non-Slovak people, was first called Czecho-Slovakia to indicate the equality of Czechs and Slovaks.

The historical fact is that there was no Czechoslovakia until it was *created* in 1918.

Robert A. Bauer
Organization for International
Economic Relations
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . It is truly remarkable how Western leaders in 1980 sound and behave like their counterparts of the 1930's. The leadership of this generation, just as that of the 30's, assumes that a totalitarian society can be satisfied with minor territorial revisions; the reality is exactly the opposite. Just as the Sudetenland did not satisfy Germany in 1938, it is equally true that the dismemberment of Israel will not satisfy the PLO, the Arab world, or their Soviet patrons in 1980.

The weakness of the West is not only reflected in its groveling for Arab oil, but also in its lack of understanding that a show of weakness strengthens Moscow's resolve to bite off more adjacent land masses, i.e., Afghanistan.

We have yet to learn the lessons of the first two world wars of this century, namely, that Western failure of resolve and the desire to purchase "peace at any price" ultimately lead to a choice between all-out war or subjugation to world dominance by the then prevailing totalitarian society. Mr. Plaut has certainly forced us to focus on the frightening parallels between 1938 and 1980. . . .

Mark E. Schlussel
Southfield, Michigan

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Some of the comparisons Steven Plaut makes between Czechoslovakia in 1938 and Israel today are striking yet deceptive; others deserve to be filled in. It is doubtful, for example—and Mr. Plaut seems to agree—that within the developing momentum of the Czech-German conflict any kind of aggressive counteraction was ever feasible. . . . The specific causes of Czechoslovakia's dismemberment are in part historical, in part symptomatic of a radical situation sweeping all Europe in the interwar period.

The Czechoslovak republic was one of several nation-states formed after the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1918. . . . The new state was formed within its "historic" confines, with a "secure" mountainous border on its northern tier but with a German minority of three million, a potential fifth column, inside its borders. The new state also contained a predominantly Polish region in Silesia, which was continuously contested by Poland, and a large Hungarian minority in southern Silesia. This latter group was counterbalanced by the Slovak majority which was ethnically aligned with the Czechs yet differed from them in dialect, education, and also relig-

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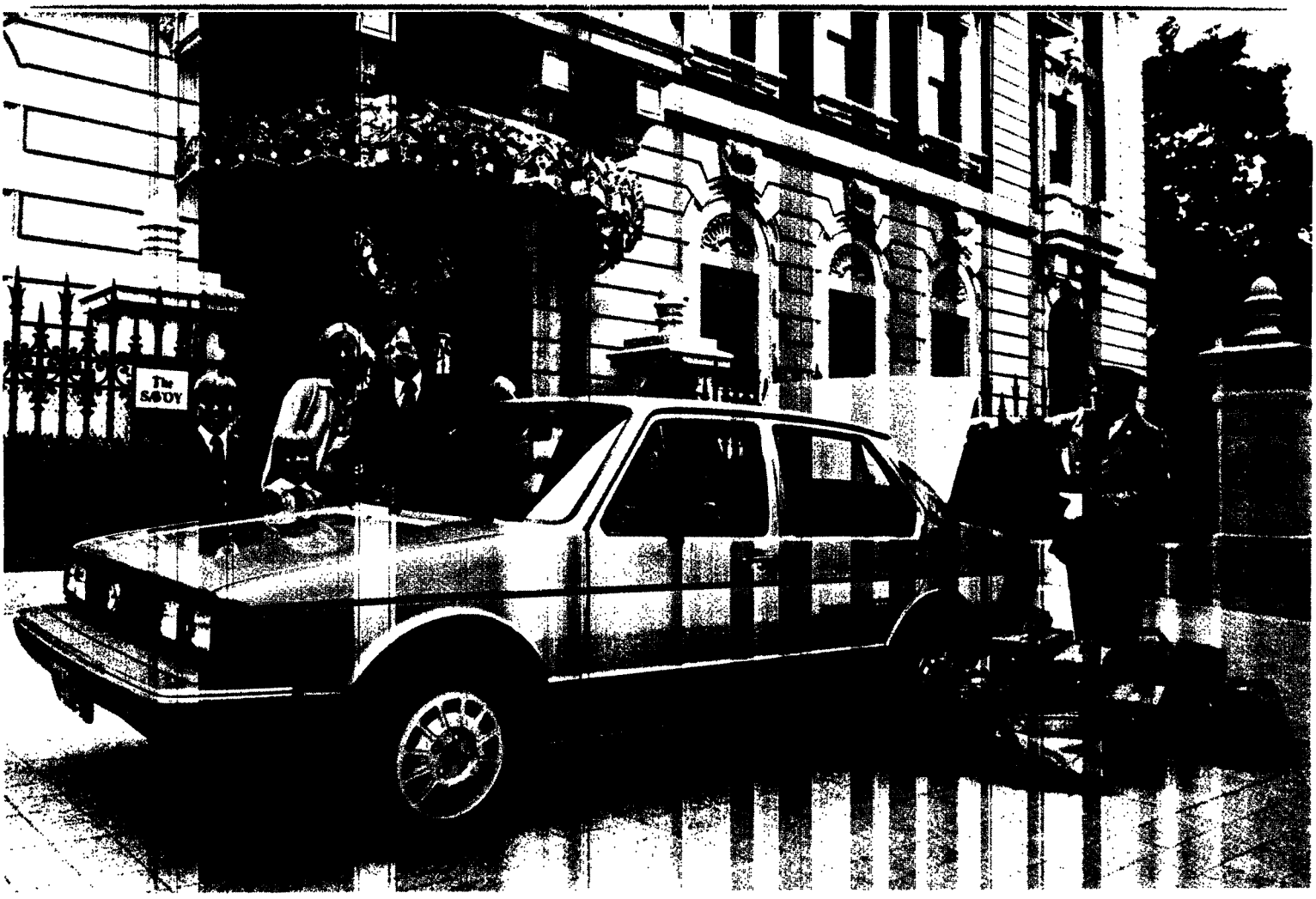

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VOLKSWAGEN DOES IT AGAIN

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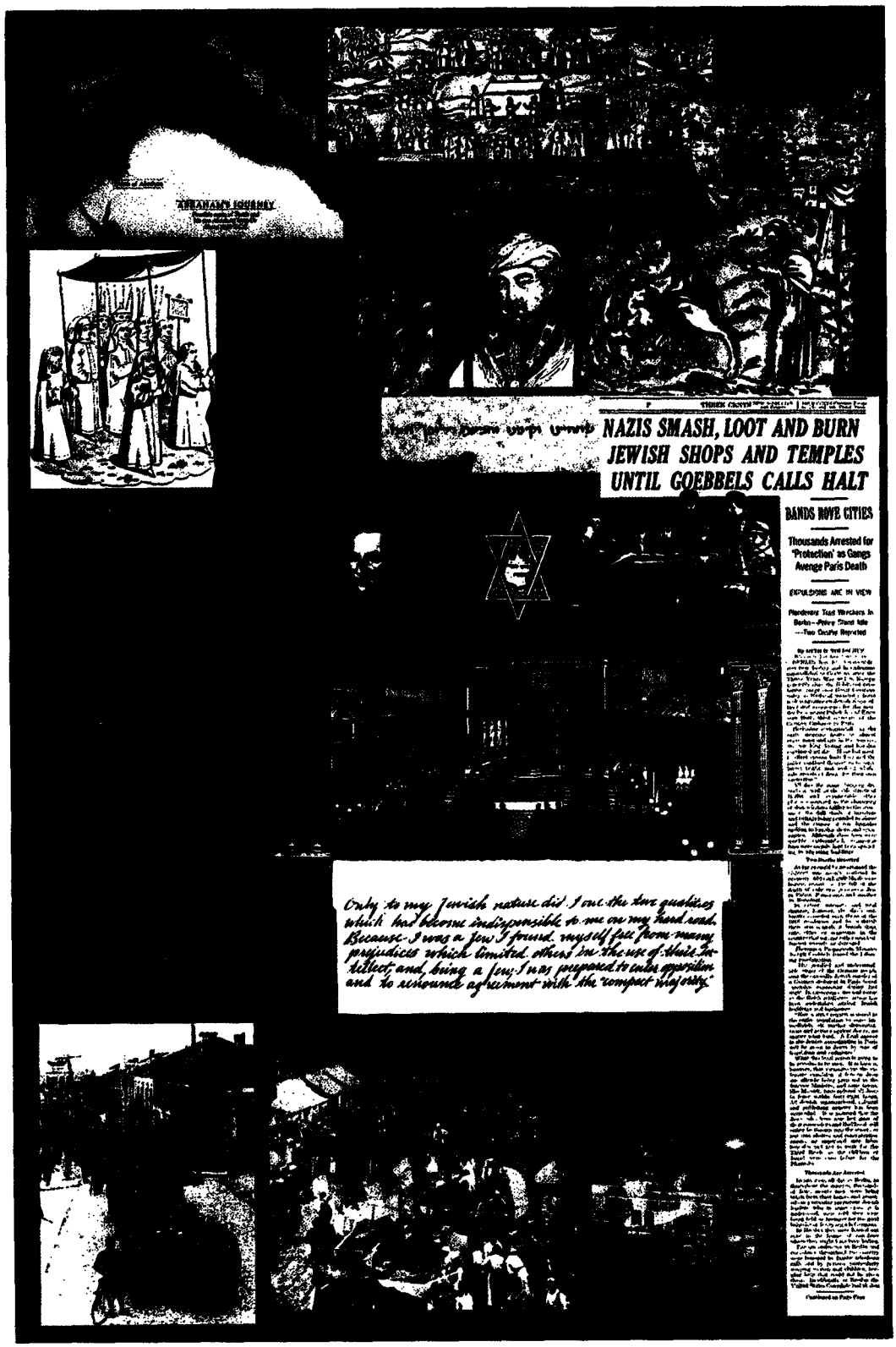
NAZIS SMASH, LOOT AND BURN
JEWISH SHOPS AND TEMPLES
UNTIL GOEBBELS CALLS HALT
BANDS ROVE CITIES
Thousands Arrested for 'Protection' as Gangs Avenge Paris Death
EXPULSIONS ARE IN VIEW
Only to my Jewish nature did I owe the two qualities which had become indispensible to me on my hard road. Because I was a Jew I found myself free from many prejudices which limited others in the use of their intellect; and, being a Jew, I was prepared to take opposition and to renounce agreement with the "compact majority."

1/250 Abraham's Journey Joan Hall

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ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY

A radiant image of the Jewish heritage

The editors of COMMENTARY are proud to offer a remarkable work of art: *Abraham's Journey* by the American artist Joan Hall. This original silkscreen/lithograph, in a limited edition of only two hundred fifty impressions, is now being made available exclusively through COMMENTARY in a once-in-a-lifetime offering.

A collage of images from great museums and archives

Abraham's Journey is a colorful and sophisticated panorama of the Jewish journey through history, from the Bible to the present day. Here in one collage are twenty of the most evocative images of the Jewish experience to be found in the collections of great museums around the world. Among the eminent institutions contributing to this documentary art project are the YIVO Institute For Jewish Research, the British Museum, Leo Baeck Institute, Bibliothèque Nationale, and Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

Painstakingly assembled through a research project that occupied several years of work, *Abraham's Journey* artfully combines manuscript illuminations, engravings, and photographs with original calligraphy and brush work. The result is a composition awash in bold colors and vibrant with the full sweep and meaning of Jewish history.

Forty centuries of Jewish experience

In striking visual detail, *Abraham's Journey* surveys four thousand years of Jewish religious tradition, cultural achievement, and contributions to Western civilization. The wanderings of the patriarch Abraham. The Twelve Tribes around the Ark of the Covenant. The Scroll of the Law. Medieval rabbis engaged in religious discussion. Polish cheder boys at study. Engraved portraits of Moses Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn, and an excerpt from Sigmund Freud's famous letter to the B'nai B'rith.

Here, too, are the diverse cultures and stark vicissitudes of the Diaspora. The exile from Palestine. Medieval Spain. The autonomous communal life of Old Prague. A delegation seeking renewal of toleration from a 15th-century Pope. Labor Zionists marching in Chelm on May Day, 1932. Emancipation and immigration to America. The Holocaust, and the rebirth of Israel, and more.

A richly talented artist

Joan Hall is an artist uniquely suited to the task of assembling this array of images into an expressive collage. Miss Hall's innovative assemblages have appeared frequently in such major periodicals as *The New York Times* and *Time Magazine*. Her work has been exhibited at the Pompidou Center in Paris as well as at one-woman shows in this country and abroad. Writing of her recent exhibition at the American Cultural Center in Paris, the *International Herald Tribune* praised her assemblages as "a blend of irony and poetry."

An exquisite edition

Abraham's Journey is a magnificent seven-color lithograph that superbly represents the modern art of printing at its height. It was printed on 100% cotton Exeter paper by one of the world's finest, custom-built Harris presses. In addition, it features silkscreen, stencil, and collage meticulously handset by leading craftsmen. The entire process, from start to finish, has been personally supervised by the artist.

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An inspiring work of art

A strikingly handsome and original work of art, *Abraham's Journey* will distinguish home or office, school or synagogue, and will inspire renewed appreciation of the Jewish heritage for years to come.

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ious outlook. Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia's progressive democratic set-up would have enabled it to survive such conflicts easily if it had been allowed a consistently tranquil period in which to develop.

However, starting with Wall Street's Black Friday, the whole world was shaken by economic and then social upheavals, demagogic revulsions, and revisionist movements. . . . After only twenty years, the Czechoslovak republic was liquidated. Ironically, only the Soviet Union offered assistance, or lip-service. In 1939, the Czech "crownlands" became a German protectorate, and Slovakia set itself up as a nominally independent but in reality Nazi-dominated separate state; the Poles and Hungarians had by then already seized their booty. Mr. Plaut fails to mention that in 1943 President Benes . . . signed a mutual-defense pact with Moscow. This provided the formal platform for the USSR's subsequent domination of . . . Czechoslovakia. . . .

It should be realized that the global, socioeconomic tremors of our own era are and will be the decisive factors in the Middle East as well. . . . Fortunately, the Middle East today is not Europe in 1938 and this might help provide Israel with a breathing space. Israel perhaps lost a faint opportunity after the 1967 war to offer a substantive withdrawal in return for a collective agreement and also to rid itself of a too strong minority. It must now bide its time in the hope that global, strategic, social, and economic realignments might bring about mutual cooperation among the powers of the region. But this has not yet happened; even Israel's paper peace wtih Egypt is fragile. . . . President Sadat must still hide behind an intellectual pan-Arab front whose religious and social schisms are exploitable only by the PLO.

What further hangs in the balance is the danger of another cycle of violent outbreaks as in 1939—an eventuality reckoned with by Israel's armed forces in their demand for parity with the encircling military build-up. Any comparisons with the Czechoslovak republic must end here—but the fate of Czechoslovakia should not preclude intensive efforts to achieve a *modus vivendi* . . . in the hope that ultimately peace will prevail.

WALTER KORN
San Mateo, California

STEVEN PLAUT writes:

I am grateful to Mark E. Schlussel for his comments, and for the clarification of historical details contained in Robert A. Bauer's letter. Whatever the actual status of the Bohemian population in the 16th and 17th centuries, the essential point of the Sudeten-Palestinian comparison remains: as in the late 1930's, so today, the European democracies are attempting to buy themselves peace through appeasement. This appeasement takes the form of endorsing claims to the right of "self-determination" which are actually euphemisms for the most blatant form of aggression and imperialist ambition.

Walter Korn points out that the possibility of Czechoslovakia preventing Sudeten "self-determination" by launching a preemptive counterattack did not exist. But the same was not true for the other Western powers, in particular in the period following the German occupation of the Ruhr valley. Instead, the European powers chose appeasement and they in turn became the targets of German aggression.

More disturbing is Mr. Korn's belief that Israel ignored an opportunity after 1967 to "rid itself" of its occupied territories and achieve a "collective agreement." No such opportunity ever existed. If it had, it would have been seized. Indeed, the National Unity government ruling Israel after 1967 did vote unanimously to offer a complete withdrawal from all territories except Jerusalem in exchange for recognition and peace (Menachem Begin was a member of that cabinet). The Arab answer was the famous set of "nos" proclaimed at the Khartoum conference. In their current state of amnesia, the Western powers prefer to forget this earlier episode and to assert that Israel's settlements are the only barrier to a resolution of the conflict.

Mr. Korn is also overly sanguine about the maintenance of Israel's military "parity," which has until now prevented the complete replication of the Sudeten analogue. Western policy currently seeks to weaken Israel's strategic position as a means of extracting concessions from Israel's so-called "intransigent" leadership. In fact, this policy only helps to strengthen the intransigence and raise the hopes of Arab leadership.

Perhaps the most ominous parallel between the current situation and the Sudeten conflict is the willingness of increasing numbers of Western intellectuals, including a number of American Jews, to offer knee-jerk endorsement of all claims to the right of "self-determination." If all Arabs everywhere are entitled to "self-determination," it must follow that Israel (and several other countries) could not exist—just as German "self-determination" ruled out independence for Czechoslovakia and Poland. Curiously, however, the Palestinians of Jordan are not deemed worthy of "self-determination" by their capricious European and American supporters.

"Foreign Policy"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One of the issues in controversy between Carl Gershman ("The Rise & Fall of the New Foreign Policy Establishment," July) and his critics (Letters from Readers, September) is whether the magazine *Foreign Policy* is a forum for the "new foreign-policy establishment," as Mr. Gershman contends, or is "open to a wide variety of reasoned views," as Samuel P. Huntington, co-founder of the magazine, asserts in his letter.

By accident, I have some experience with *Foreign Policy* which may throw light on the argument. In its Winter 1979/80 issue the magazine carried a fourteen-page article by Dimitri Simes, a former "staff member of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow," as *Foreign Policy* introduces him (without mentioning the fact that he has emigrated from Russia). Mr. Simes's article, written after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and entitled "The Anti-Soviet Brigade," predictably singles out COMMENTARY, and especially Mr. Gershman, as among the chief culprits in bringing about a state of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

I felt duty bound to write a letter to Richard H. Ullman, editor of *Foreign Policy*, requesting "equal space" in his magazine for a rebuttal. (Soviet emigrés, of whom I am one, were also directly attacked by Mr. Simes.) The magazine answered that this was impossible, but suggested a letter instead: "As you may know," the new editor of the magazine informed me in his letter of June 5, 1980, "*Foreign Policy* does publish letters which offer a counterview to

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the articles which appeared in the magazine."

Since a letter is better than nothing, I wrote one responding to what I regarded as Mr. Simes's blatant apologetics for Soviet policies. About two months later I received a note from the magazine which informed me that it "rarely" runs letters, and anyway my letter did *not* offer an "alternative approach" to Mr. Simes's article.

In its September issue, COMMENTARY published pages of letters from those associated with *Foreign Policy* as well as other critics of Carl Gershman's article, though the content of some of these letters reduced to insults. In them Messrs. Richard H. Ullman, Stanley Hoffmann, Samuel P. Huntington, and others had in particular a chance to proclaim how open *Foreign Policy* is to widely varied views. Yet in the meantime, and under a comical pretext, *Foreign Policy* had rejected a single letter critical of an article in its pages. I believe Mr. Gershman was far too cautious in his estimate of *Foreign Policy* as a forum for the new foreign-policy establishment. It would seem to be a closed forum as well.

LEV NAVROZOV
Riverdale, New York

Literary Studies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is hard to know for certain that "we are currently in the midst of a distinctly second-rate literary era," as Joseph Epstein claims in his article, "Is American Literature an Equal-Opportunity Employer?" [June]. There are, after all, a number of brilliant and serious writers among us. Some of us think Saul Bellow a major figure, even if he does fall short of Solzhenitsyn. And the best books of Styron, Pynchon, Mailer, even Heller ought not to be sneered at. In all, questions about the quality of an entire era have a lot to do with who is doing the asking and who feels competent to offer an answer. For greatness in recent literature Mr. Epstein invokes the name of V.S. Naipaul, and I happen to agree. But most of the better, and better-known, British critics, for example, are on record as believing that Naipaul is at most a gifted journalist whose novels have merely an ephemeral or topical interest. And though Mr. Epstein clearly does not believe that Robert Lowell was a major poet, or that Robert Penn Warren is producing the greatest poetry of old age since Hardy, there are plenty of scrupulous people around to argue with him. No one should be as dead certain about the achievement of his own time as Mr. Epstein seems to be.

Two further points. Mr. Epstein claims that "increasingly over the years critic and author are at one in their assumption," and cites as evidence Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*. Why? Because Lasch quotes a passage or two from Heller's novel, *Something Happened*, to illustrate or dramatize what he takes to be the pernicious effects of working for American corporations. I see nothing wrong with this practice. Lasch doesn't use the Heller passage to *prove* his point but to show that other observers have seen what he sees and have borne witness to it novelistically.

Mr. Epstein also deplores "the vast over-production of criticism devoted to contemporary writers." I think he's right, but he blunts his point by targeting the wrong items and confusing the issue. If it is the case that a great many academic journals invite articles on poets or novelists of little distinction, it is also true that other journals typically reserve space for articles on writers who have demonstrated real staying power. *Salmagundi*, for example—I mention it because Mr. Epstein does, and because I can speak with some authority on the matter—has given over most of its literary attentions to writers like Lowell, Bellow, Lionel Trilling. Why then should it devote in a recent issue forty-two pages to an essay on the poet John Peck? Because a number of us believe that Peck, though young, is already a major poet, and that he needs to be introduced to a wider audience. He is a difficult poet, and though his work has been lavishly praised by writers as various as Helen Vendler, Howard Nemerov, Richard Howard, and Donald Davie, his first and best volume of poems, *Shagbark*, is out of print. Mr. Epstein complains that, when one reads yet another essay on Faulkner, on Bellow, on Stevens, "one feels one has read all this before." But no one has ever before read an essay on John Peck, or on Louise Glück, or one or two of the other difficult, underpraised poets *Salmagundi* has tried to discover. This is a legitimate and a necessary service that only certain journals are in a position to perform. COMMENTARY and the *American Scholar* have important things to do, but they do not typically provide guidance or instruction to people primarily interested in literary matters. Though they publish occasional poems or stories, they do not invest, so to speak, in the careers of particular young writers or attempt to build an audience for their work. Perhaps it is Mr. Epstein's view that all serious magazines should resemble his own. In that case, he should say so. But he should not suggest that *any* criticism devoted to contemporary writing is ill-conceived. After all, R.P. Blackmur wrote on Moore and Cummings and Stevens only a short time after these poets published their first volumes. And Randall Jarrell wrote extensively on Lowell when the poet was only in his twenties. For these and other acts of literary discovery and analysis, many of us are still grateful.

ROBERT BOYERS
Editor, *Salmagundi*
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, New York

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

Robert Boyers does not seem to be much interested in engaging any of the main points in my article. Although he takes a long time to get to it, what apparently troubles him is my slighting reference to an essay of forty-odd pages entitled "'Shipwreck, Autochthony, and Nostos': An Approach to the Poetry of John Peck" that appeared in *Salmagundi*, the journal he edits. I cited this essay as an instance of literary studies being onto lean days. Now I cannot claim to have read this essay in its entirety—as I said in my own article, at first I thought it might be a parody—but neither can I imagine anyone other than Mr. Peck and his immediate family reading it in its entirety. *Salmagundi* is, of course, what is known as a "little" magazine; "little" magazines have in this century, as anyone interested in literature knows, rendered great service. But there are often sad reasons—and essays such as "'Shipwreck, Autochthony, and Nostos': An Approach to the Poetry of John Peck" is one of them—why they remain "little."

Judaism & Ethics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In my letter to the editor [Letters from Readers, July], I

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pointed out that the concept of human nature described and espoused by Sidney Hook in his article, "Isaiah Berlin's Enlightenment" [May], is essentially the view of the normative tradition in Judaism rather than that of the classical Christian doctrine of original sin with which he virtually identified it. In his response, Mr. Hook concedes the essential validity of my observation.

However, he makes a few additional points worthy of comment. He asks, "Are there not other traditions in Judaism, expressed in the Book of Job and in the cosmic piety of those who accept the holocausts of this world as part of the divine scheme of things as they await deliverance by the Messiah?" Obviously, the long, complex historical experience of the Jewish people and the stubborn streak of independence in the Jewish mentality precluded the establishment of a monochromatic or monolithic tradition. Hence, there are many strands in the patterns, but, to mix the metaphors, some are dominant and others recessive. However, it is thoroughly unjustified to juxtapose the profound wrestling with the problem of evil in the Book of Job with the simplistic views of some pietists who "explain" the indescribable horrors of the Holocaust as instances of the operation of divine justice, a view that can only be described as blasphemy.

As for Mr. Hook's point that "acceptance of these truths [i.e., about human nature] does not entail belief in any supernatural existence," the key term that would require analysis is "supernatural," as Niebuhr and Tillich would surely have pointed out. An analysis of Mr. Hook's contention cannot be undertaken here. I believe that a belief in a transcendent power is indispensable for a viable system of ethical theory to undergird a moral society. That some axioms of belief are indispensable for morality is a conclusion to which I was propelled in a paper I undertook to write that sought to establish a firm basis for ethics in a secular age without recourse to "religion and theology." Undoubtedly, many will strongly disagree with this thesis, but that it had some merit is clear from the fact that the article was chosen to serve as the opening paper to be read at an international conference on "Science and Ethics," convened by the Haifa Technion in December 1975. Subsequently, the essay appeared under the title, "Ethics in a Technological Society," in *Judaism* (Winter 1976), as well as in the Hebrew quarterly *Gesher,* published in Israel.

Even if the thesis "that morality is autonomous of religion and theology" could be theoretically established, which I doubt, the historical record demonstrates that the erosion of an underlying consensus of belief among the citizenry inevitably leads to the collapse of an effective moral order in society. The year of grace 1980 is a case in point. As Samuel Johnson said concerning another age-old controversy, "With regard to free-will as against predestination, all philosophy is against it and all experience is for it."

[Rabbi] Robert Gordis
Jewish Theological Seminary of America
New York City

Sidney Hook writes:

Rabbi Gordis misstates what I have written and what I have conceded. I did not identify my concept of human nature with "the classical Christian doctrine of original sin." I said that it was compatible with a commonsensical, secular rendering of the doctrine that recognized the finitude of man and his potential corruptibility without recourse to myth or mystery. I was prepared to accept on Rabbi Gordis's authority his statement that what he called normative Judaism, as distinct from other varieties, is in agreement with my conception of human nature. This was the extent of my concession. I am confident, however, that there are also some non-orthodox forms of Christianity that are also compatible with my views of human nature, e.g., the Pelagian and semi-Pelagian heretics.

I must confess that I find rather shocking Rabbi Gordis's characterization of the beliefs of some of his Orthodox co-religionists as a form of "blasphemy." It reminds me of a startling experience many years ago when I was invited to address an Orthodox congregation in New York City. After introducing me rather fulsomely as an "honest atheist," the rabbi proceeded to lash out furiously against Mordecai Kaplan and his disciples as apostates and betrayers of the Jewish faith. Whether Rabbi Gordis's conception of Judaism is more dominant and authentic than those of the pietists he decries, I have no way of knowing.

Rabbi Gordis seems unwilling to admit that acceptance of truths about human nature "does not entail belief in any supernatural existence." I am puzzled by his reference to Niebuhr and Tillich here. Would he also be unwilling to admit that acceptance of truths about human nature "does not entail belief in any supernatural being"? Is the meaning of "a transcendent power," which he claims is necessary for a viable system of ethical theory, any clearer than "supernatural existence"? Even if it were true that some axioms are indispensable for a theory of morality, why does it follow that the existence of a transcendent power is among them any more than in number theory or in any other systematic theory?

Rabbi Gordis seems insufficiently aware that it is not enough to establish the existence of a supernatural or transcendent power as a justification for morality. The activity of such an existence or power is itself subject to the objective, rational moral judgment of man. In other words, we must know the meaning of good and under what circumstances actions are right or wrong before we can declare God and his works good. This is what is meant by the autonomy of moral judgment.

However that may be, declares Rabbi Gordis, the absence of a consensus of religious belief "inevitably leads to the collapse of an effective moral order in society." Even if this were true, it would not be evidence of the truth of religious belief. Napoleon and Metternich, both unbelievers, were convinced that the decay of religious belief among the masses would lead to moral chaos and anarchy. Complex empirical questions of causation are involved here. Civic virtue is a function of many variables. The ages of religious faith have also witnessed in some periods the collapse of an effective moral order in society.

I look forward to reading Rabbi Gordis's article on "Ethics in a Technological Society" in hopes of learning from it. Meanwhile I take the liberty of suggesting that before taking Niebuhr and Tillich as his guides, he examine my critical analysis of their central doctrines in my *The Quest for Being* and my *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life.*

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Psychoanalysis

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the October letters columns the critical responses to Frederick Crews's article, "Analysis Terminable" [July], included a letter from Peter Barglow which took issue with me as well, because Mr. Crews had adduced some of my writings. But just as Mr. Crews spoke for himself in his reply, so now I speak merely for myself.

The pertinent statement by Mr. Crews in his original article read:

> In an important series of recent articles, the eminent philosopher of science Adolf Grünbaum has inquired whether psychoanalysis meets currently accepted canons of inductivism [footnote omitted]. His judgments will be gathered in a book to be entitled *Is Psychoanalysis a Pseudo-Science?* While Grünbaum does not rule out the logical possibility that some Freudian hypotheses may one day be supported, he finds that for now psychoanalysis rests on no solid evidence and that its purported clinical confirmations are open to the most fundamental doubts.

Mr. Crews's appended footnote cites my "Epistemological Liabilities of the Clinical Appraisal of Psychoanalytic Theory," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 2 (1979), pp. 451-526.

To these particular remarks, Dr. Barglow retorted:

> . . . To guide us Mr. Crews recommends we read philosophy professor Adolf Grünbaum, who he threatens will soon place me in the ranks of the unemployed by declaring psychoanalysis a pseudo-science. Grünbaum's major contribution [cited above] so far fortunately falls far short of this ambition. It is a thoughtful piece, featuring, however, the tendencies toward the "either/or," two-alternative thinking which is characteristic of many theoreticians of behavioral psychology. Using an orthodox medical model, Grünbaum asks the question, what constitutes cure? He reasons as follows: when a physician gives a pill which produces a symptomatic cure, this can either be explained by the action of "characteristic" factors that are causally relevant and essential or by "incidental" factors that are irrelevant and illusionary, like the influence of suggestion or belief (the placebo effect). But the sharpness of this distinction between the two classes of

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factors is blurred in the special process of psychoanalysis and the hermeneutic component of a cure of course is excluded a priori. . . . In any case, can we ever allow physicists or Grünbaum, Eysenck, and Crews to define what is absolute "scientific" truth about the human being?

Dr. Barglow was kind enough to characterize my paper as "thoughtful." Hence I greatly regret that he did not even understand the issue to which it is devoted, let alone its reasoning.

Even so friendly a critic of Freud as Wilhelm Fliess had discounted clinical data from analysis as furnishing only *spurious* confirmations of psychoanalytic theory. It was objected that analysts talk their docile patients into producing the very clinical responses that they need to validate Freud's theory of personality, and that psychoanalysis acts as an emotional corrective by mere suggestion rather than by imparting genuine self-knowledge. Speaking of this objection, Freud declared: "If it were justified, psychoanalysis would be nothing more than a particularly well-disguised and particularly effective form of suggestive treatment and we should have to attach little weight to all that it tells us about what influences our lives, the dynamics of the mind, or the unconscious." . . . In his 1917 lecture, "Analytic Therapy," Freud therefore made a brilliant, strenuous effort to rebut the ominous charge that the analyst has no warrant for claiming to be mediating bona-fide insights to his compliant patient rather than only fanciful pseudo-insights which ring true to both of them.

As I documented in the paper that Dr. Barglow alleges to have summarized, Freud explicitly hinged his rebuttal on the following crucial assumptions: the truthful excavation of the patient's hidden conflicts by the psychoanalytic method is *necessary* for the conquest of his or her illness. But the disclosure, thus requisite for therapeutic success, will occur, in turn, *only* if the analyst's incorrect interpretations, spuriously confirmed by *contaminated* responses from the patient, have been sloughed off in favor of correct constructions, derived from clinical data that were *not* distorted by the patient's acquiescence in the analyst's communicated expectations. Therefore Freud concluded that the *therapeutic* successes of psychoanalysis vouch for the truth of his theory of personality. And in 1923, he reiterated this epistemological rebuttal to the accusation of spurious confirmation by suggestion. . . .

When Dr. Barglow discussed the therapeutic effectiveness of analysis, he was quite unaware of the crucial role of Freud's rebuttal. As he would have it: ". . . the validity of psychoanalytic theory is not connected historically or epistemologically to psychoanalytic treatment." But, besides being incorrect historically, this disavowal of Freud's rebuttal devastatingly undermines the clinical validation of psychoanalytic theory for precisely the reasons that Freud explicitly acknowledged in the quotation above. And Dr. Barglow's lengthy disquisition is conspicuously silent as to just what other exoneration of clinical validation he would offer in the face of the telling charge of spurious confirmation by self-fulfilling influences of the analyst on the patient. This charge was leveled in 1962 by the analyst Judd Marmor, who discounted the clinical support adduced by *each* of the "radically divergent theories" of psychoanalysis, when he reported the following: "The fact is that patients treated by analysts of all these schools . . . believe strongly in the insights which they have been given . . . depending upon the point of view of the analyst, the patients of each school seem to bring up precisely the kind of phenomenological data which confirm the theories and interpretations of their analysts! Thus each theory tends to be self-validating" ("Psychoanalytic Therapy as an Educational Process," *Psychoanalytic Education*, J. Masserman, ed., Grune & Stratton, 1962, p. 289). Yet Dr. Barglow simply ignores even such old damaging evidence and relies considerably on such clinical data as the "recovery of corroborating childhood memories," the Benedek and Rubinstein correlations of "analytic data with phases of the menstrual cycle," and the results from the use of "empathy and introspection to examine the data of the clinical situation."

One major objective of my paper was to show that evidence that has been accumulating from the results of a number of rival psychotherapies has rendered the main premise of Freud's rebuttal well-nigh empirically untenable. Indeed, I argued that no empirically plausible alternative to that cardinal discredited premise is in sight, so that no viable substitute for his rebuttal appears on the horizon. Upon combining this result with a number of other epistemological liabilities of clinical data that I exhibited in my paper, I drew the following conclusion: "The liabilities of data from the psychoanalytic interview [treatment sessions] that I have discussed apply at least to claims of validation by the clinical findings already in hand. Yet it is on this contaminated and *non*probative evidence that Freud and many of his adherents have relied to claim validation. But this skeptical assessment should *not* be taken to suggest that I conjecture an unfavorable outcome from genuinely probative future evidence." . . .

In the course of marshaling the doubts that beset the principal premise of Freud's rebuttal, I articulated the currently generalized placebo concept, which originated largely in pharmacology. And I did so in order to give clear formulations of the reasons for the following important concession, made by such eminent analysts as Lawrence Kubie and stated in 1978 by Luborsky and Spence: "Psychoanalysts, like other psychotherapists, literally *do not know* how they achieve their results," a disclaimer which pertains to the dynamics of the therapeutic process rather than to the quality of its outcome.

Let me now address Dr. Barglow's specific complaints. . . .

Contrary to Dr. Barglow, my analysis of the placebo concept did *not* relate to an explication of the desiderata of treatment-*outcome* or "cure." Instead, it related to the plainly unsolved problem of seeking to identify those elements in the treatment-*process* which deserve the credit for such desirable therapeutic results as may ensue. Insofar as my distinction between the "characteristic" analytic insight factors credited by Freud, on the one hand, and other theoretically "incidental" factors on the other, employs "an orthodox medical model," it is Freud's therapeutic theory and not my dichotomous thinking which made it germane. And why do I deserve censure for a faithful exegesis of Freud when I thus employ "either/or thinking"?

Moreover, Dr. Barglow saddles me with the mindless claim that when therapeutic credit does belong to the theoretically incidental

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treatment factors, then these are causally "irrelevant" to the treatment-outcome and "illusionary," rather than different in identity from the characteristic ones credited by the theory. Indeed, Dr. Barglow's derogation of "either/or thinking" boomerangs massively in this context: if the sharpness of the distinction between characteristic and incidental treatment factors is "blurred" in psychoanalytic treatment, as Dr. Barglow maintains, then there is a concomitant blurring between psychoanalytic therapy and those of its rivals which analysts inveterately accuse of treating only symptoms rather than *causes*!

My purportedly illicit dichotomous thinking allegedly issued in my having "excluded a priori" the so-called "hermeneutic component of a cure." What is this hermeneutic component? It is presumably the rationale enabling the patient to make some kind of interpretive and credible sense of his past conduct and future goals. Far from having excluded this hermeneutic component a priori, I appraised it a posteriori when I wrote: "Unless and until the bold psychoanalytic theory of personality, on which this acquisition of self-understanding is predicated, can claim good epistemic credentials, the avowed educative objective is pretentious to the point of being a snare and a delusion for the unwary." And if the reply is that it is not the scientific validity of the rationale given to the patient which matters therapeutically, but only its subjective verisimilitude for the analysand, then I retort: the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, Billy Graham, and evangelists of some non-Christian faiths have given their "born again" followers a "hermeneutic component of cure" whose subjective force and dramatic, lasting effects can make any secular therapist green with envy! Yet Freud deemed just such a hermeneutic to be a symptom of a mass psychosis. . . .

An only slightly more subtle form of disparagement occurs when Dr. Barglow refers to me as "philosophy professor Adolf Grünbaum." The footnote on the first page of my article, which told him that I have a chair in philosophy, also stated that I have an appointment as research professor of psychiatry. If my job description is relevant, then why did he omit the latter designation? Was it to hint to the reader that I am only an outsider whose views ought not to carry the same weight as his?

When I challenged Freudians to justify their claim of clinical validation, I hardly purported to offer a theory of human nature alternative to Freud's, let alone did I claim certainty for such a rival theory. Hence it was philistine and shabby for Dr. Barglow to depict me as having engaged in the epistemologically untutored endeavor "to define what is absolute 'scientific' truth about the human being." I very much regret that Dr. Barglow has rendered a disservice to the requisite kind of rational discussion. With spokesmen like Dr. Barglow, contemporary psychoanalysis needs no enemies.

ADOLF GRÜNBAUM
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"Living in Jidda"

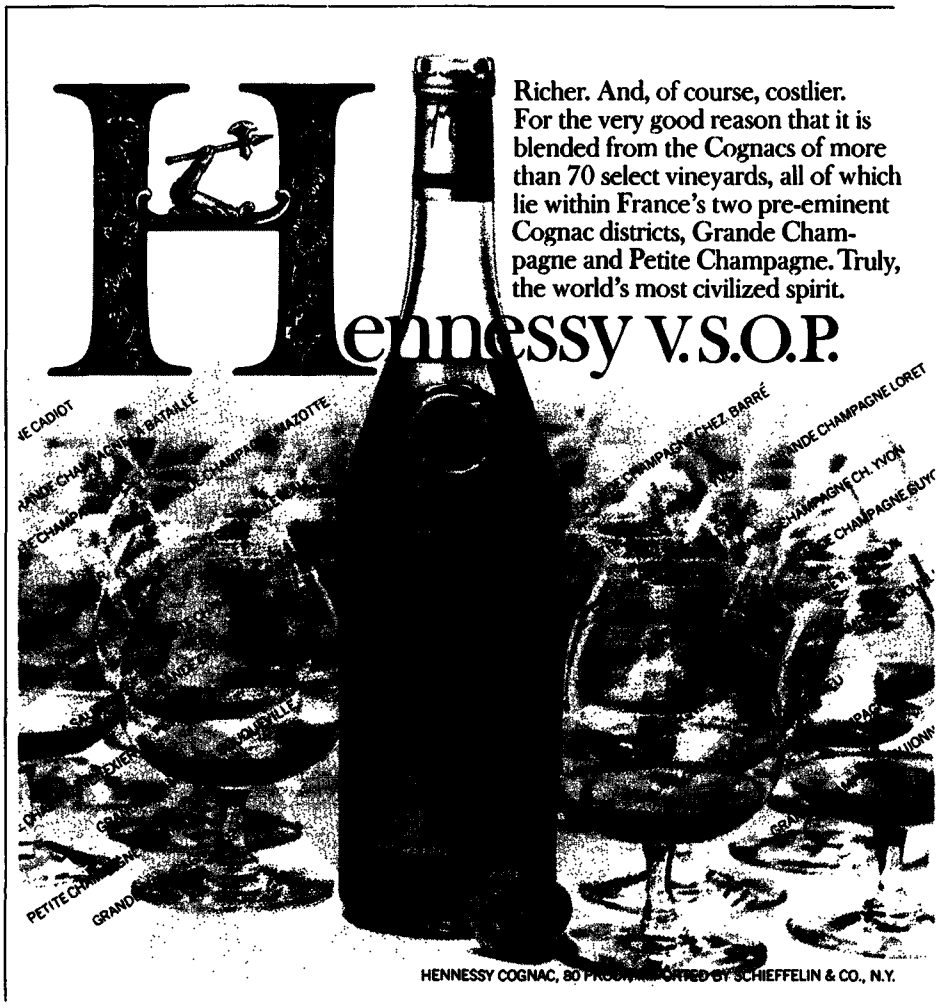
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dale Walker's "Living in Jidda" [July] is a remarkable piece of writing. Mr. Walker does something similar to what V.S. Naipaul does in his journalism, but with his own special voice, his own special outlook. One reads with amazement that this is his first published article. . . .

PETER HORNIK
Clifton Park, New Jersey

Correction

Two typographical errors occurred in Roger Starr's article, "The Three Mile Shadow," October. The last sentence on page 49 should read: "Although the accident ultimately involved the reactor vessel and the nuclear fuel, it would not have occurred but for the malfunction and shutdown of the plant's steam-turbine generating system." On page 50, the last two sentences in the first paragraph should read: "Thus, Richard Webb has suggested the possibility of a breakdown in the gravity-operated system that stops the chain nuclear reaction. There has never been such an episode, here or abroad, in any of the commercial or military reactors that have been in operation for years."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American Power & the Persian Gulf

Robert W. Tucker

IN THE immediate wake of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, there was a sudden and widespread disposition in the country to acknowledge that we were confronted with a grave international crisis centered in the Persian Gulf. The shock of Afghanistan, coming as it did on top of events in Iran, appeared for a brief period to have transformed the political landscape that had prevailed for a decade. The President made no small contribution to this apparent transformation. Not only did he express outrage over Moscow's actions and confess that the scales had suddenly been lifted from his eyes; he also declared that events in the Gulf presented the United States, and the West, with the most serious threat to vital interests since the late 1940's. The Carter Doctrine expressed in formal terms the new awareness of the danger confronting this country and its major allies in the Persian Gulf and committed the United States to oppose by any means necessary, including military force, an attempt by any outside power to gain control of the Persian Gulf region. Moreover, the administration held out the promise that it would now move with dispatch to provide the necessary means to back up its policy reorientation in the Gulf.

These events of January and February are the better part of a year behind us. The intervening period has provided a growing sense of disappointment—bordering on dismay—to those of us who had hoped that the initial reaction to Afghanistan signaled a real transformation of American policy in the Middle East and beyond. What we have instead witnessed is the reassertion of patterns of thought and of action that in January seemed to have been discredited beyond repair. The momentary chagrin and disarray of those who had counseled policies which contributed to the present crisis have been only momentary. In recent months there has been a regrouping of old forces and a return to familiar themes. The address given in June at Harvard University by former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, an address widely hailed as admirable and clear-sighted, provided the signal for counterattack.

One of the principal stewards of a policy that has brought us to near disaster, Vance was not only unrepentant but even uncharacteristically assertive in his defense of that policy. To a nation that is presently unable to defend, if need be, its vital interests in the Gulf, and may not be in a position to do so for some years to come, his higher wisdom was to warn against the "dangerous fallacy of the military solution to non-military problems" and to remind us that "military power is a basis, not a substitute, for diplomacy." Considering our present plight, Vance's admonitions betray either an extraordinary obtuseness or an almost willful refusal to confront reality. Nevertheless, they have been eagerly taken up by many who share the former Secretary's outlook but who were momentarily on the defensive last winter. Thus the Carter Doctrine is now seen by an increasing number at home—as it is seen in Western Europe—as a military response to what is presumably an essentially non-military problem; a military response, moreover, that attempts to preserve the status quo in a region where change is perhaps the only certainty.

Given the signs that are almost daily more numerous, one must be a determined optimist to believe that the debate over American foreign policy, particularly in the Persian Gulf, has now been decided and that a transformation of policy may be taken for granted. Despite the Carter Doctrine and despite the much heralded Rapid Deployment Force, there has been to date no such transformation. We remain in a period of indecision and uncertainty. The events of the past year have shaken the established foreign-policy framework; they have not destroyed it. In somewhat altered form it survives and may even be given a new lease on life regardless of the outcome of the election.

II

IN HIS moment of truth last winter, President Carter did not exaggerate when he characterized developments in the Per-

ROBERT W. TUCKER, professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins, is the author of *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* and *The Inequality of Nations*, among other works. His widely-discussed articles in COMMENTARY include "Oil: The Issue of American Intervention" (January 1975), "Oil and American Power—Three Years Later" (January 1977), and "Oil and American Power—Six Years Later" (September 1979).

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sian Gulf region as posing the gravest international threat we have faced since the 1940's. Though subsequently derided as alarmist, if anything the comparison minimized the present danger. Iran and Afghanistan—as well as the outbreak of war between Iraq and Iran—have made blindingly clear the scope and magnitude of the threat now posed to continued Western access to the oil of the Persian Gulf. What remained prior to these events a matter of speculation and uncertainty can no longer be so. The revolution in Iran, and then the Iraqi-Iranian war, revealed the nature of the indigenous threat to Western access. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan revealed the nature of the external threat. For the moment we may put aside the question of which of these dangers is of greater immediacy or significance. Both are there and, for the time being, we live at the mercy of both. Moreover, the two may not be easily separated in practice, and this despite the attempt to separate them in the Carter Doctrine. The Russians may be expected to take such advantage as they can of internal upheaval and intraregional conflict. In the years ahead, they are likely to find a number of opportunities for doing so.

The most apparent meaning of these events, then, is that we have entered a new phase of the endemic oil crisis. In an earlier phase, the salient issue raised was that of price. At least, this was the prevailing interpretation given the crisis by experts. The great question was deemed to be: how can the world pay for OPEC oil? That question, of course, persists today, and in view of the recent increases in price—let alone the increases anticipated in the years ahead—it does so in acute form. But the developments in Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq have clearly raised yet another and more serious issue: that of physical access to the oil apart from price. For Iran demonstrated that a producer might either refuse or prove unable to maintain anywhere near its previous level of production. And Afghanistan opened the prospect of losing physical access to an outside power that possesses the military capacity to impose its control over the Gulf.

The loss of physical access need not be equated with a literal cut-off from the oil supplies of the Gulf. This is one possible consequence of losing access. It forms the extreme or limiting case, and although it may never come to pass, the possibility alone of its occurrence is sufficient to condition the behavior of those who have lost their former position but who remain as dependent as ever on the resources of the Gulf. In all likelihood, the West would continue to get something that roughly approximates its present share of Persian Gulf oil regardless of the power that controlled access to the oil. But it would get the oil only on the terms, economic and political, laid down by those who enjoyed control.

This is, in fact, the situation we have been moving toward for some time with respect to the producing countries. Step by step, the major consumers in the West have surrendered such leverage as they once exercised over the producers. In turn, the latter have increasingly laid down the terms, both economic and political, on which the former may receive oil. Walter J. Levy has recently written: "Because of the fear of being arbitrarily cut off from supplies, Western nations and their companies now accept within a wide range practically any economic or political terms that a producing country may impose on them."* Levy observes that this subservience has only encouraged producing countries to proceed as they see fit, which has meant in an increasingly arbitrary manner, and he concludes that we have entered a period in international oil of near "lawlessness." But this is only to say that the major Western consumers have on almost every occasion backed away from the attempt to apply countervailing power against the producing countries. In this manner, they have gone very far toward surrendering physical access in its most elemental sense.

WHETHER this situation, one without real parallel in the history of state relations, might have persisted in the absence of the Soviet Union must remain an open question. It does not seem plausible, however, to assume that it could. For that assumption requires us to believe that the nations of the West, though incomparably more powerful than the principal Middle East producing countries, would go on indefinitely in their acceptance of actions that jeopardize their economic well-being and, ultimately, their political well-being. It requires us to believe that despite the prospect of chronic bouts of inflation and recession, that despite the recurrent threat to the international financial system, the Western countries would continue to remain supine before the demands of the major producers, with the result that wealth and power would pass in ever increasing measure from the hands of those who only yesterday could scarcely have imagined their plight of today.

Given the record of Western behavior in the past decade, it must be conceded that the above assumption cannot be simply dismissed. From the emergence of Khaddafi to the advent of Khomeini, this record is one that will surely fascinate, while mystifying, future historians. Never before have power and position been given up with such alacrity and in circumstances which plainly did not require their abandonment. Never before have nations that possessed so great a superiority in power as the Western countries possessed over the Middle East producers placed themselves in so needless and so dangerous a predicament. At any one

* "Oil and the Decline of the West," *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1980), p. 1004.

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of a number of points, the dangerous slide might have been arrested and even reversed. Until that slide was well advanced, it had little if anything to do with the Soviet Union. On the contrary, what is surprising, as Elie Kedourie has noted, "is that so much time should have elapsed between the visible erosion of Western power and prestige in the Middle East and the inescapable conclusions the Soviet Union was bound to draw from this willfully self-destructive conduct."* Though the Soviets may now be expected to take such advantage as they can of the Western descent from grace—why should they not?—it was not the Soviets who initiated the descent and gave it the momentum it soon acquired.

These considerations notwithstanding, it strains credulity to assume that the process we have witnessed could have continued indefinitely in the absence of the Soviet Union. Sooner or later, the consequences of continuing on the course followed since the late 1960's would almost certainly have led to a reaction in the countries of the West and to the reassertion of a control that has been so readily relinquished. Governments that refused to take the measures necessary for such reassertion would have been replaced by governments that accepted the need for taking them. There are, after all, limits to the thralldom in which a political pathology may hold those who have not lost all sense of reality. In the past year or two we had begun to press against those limits. The consequences of the sudden deprivation of Iranian production, the leap in prices, the increasing subservience demanded by the producing states, and —above all perhaps—the growing realization that all this might well be only the harbinger of greater things to come, were beginning at long last to have their effects. Without the dramatic demonstration of Soviet power, they might well have issued in the attempt to redress the balance between producers and consumers and, more particularly, to reassert a measure of Western control over the Persian Gulf.

Now as in the past, the states of the Gulf cannot literally defend themselves against a substantial outside force, whether emanating from the Soviet Union or from the West. All they can do is attempt to deter such outside forces from being used by threatening to blow up the oil fields in response to military intervention. This threat has been voiced with varying ambiguity for some five years, particularly by Saudi officials. In the West, it has been taken with the utmost seriousness. Indeed, many expert observers consider the destruction of the oil facilities a virtual certainty in the event of outside intervention, though why they should do so is by no means apparent. Destruction of the oil fields cannot serve a defensive purpose, as does a scorched-earth policy, for it will not make more difficult the invader's conduct of military operations. Even if the destruction is quite thorough, it denies the invader his objective only for a limited period. The threat of such denial as a deterrent may make sense, depending upon the time required for repairing the destruction and, of course, the state of the need of the invader. The same threat as a defense makes very little sense.

As a deterrent, the threat to destroy the oil fields may have only a limited effect on those who have no desperate need for continuous oil supplies. This consideration is relevant not only to the Soviet Union but to such obvious local disturbers of the fragile peace of the Gulf as Iraq. If the limited number and fragility of the ports and pump sites which control the flow of oil from the Gulf are such that any outside military intervention would result in their almost certain destruction, the same result must be held as likely to follow from any serious outbreak of conflict involving only the local states. If there were any doubt of this before the Iraqis and the Iranians began bombing each other's oil installations last September, there can be no doubt of it now. Thus, given the very considerable potential for further turbulence in the region, the prospects for enjoying continuous oil supplies in the years ahead must be rated as quite low. But if this is once accepted, then at least one of the great and standing objections to any attempt by the West to reassert its power in the Gulf must be largely discarded. The Soviet reaction apart, nothing would be jeopardized by such reassertion that irrespective of our wishes would not be jeopardized through other developments; and a great deal might be gained.

These considerations have been obscured only because there has long been a near universal determination in the West not to acknowledge the stark alternatives that confront us in the Persian Gulf. Although it *is* admitted that *some* power (s) must control the region, the pretense is maintained that the power(s) may be the local states, and this despite their weakness relative to outside powers and their marked instability. This pretense requires us to believe that the key to global power for at least another generation, and possibly beyond, will remain with those who even when taken collectively represent a virtual power vacuum.

Time will surely lay bare this illusion for what it is. The vital resource of the Gulf can no more remain independent of great-power control than Europe in 1945 could remain outside the effective sphere of both Soviet and American power. In retrospect, it is possible to imagine at least one of the superpowers having extended its sway over the whole of Europe. It is much easier to imagine that the line of division could have been drawn other than where it was. But it is scarcely possible to

* "Western Deference in the Mideast," *New Republic* (June 7, 1980), p. 19.

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conceive of the continent that had once been the center of the international system, and that suddenly had been transformed into a power vacuum through war and defeat, not attracting a competition for control by the two great victors. In defeat, Europe still represented the vital stake for the newly emergent superpowers that had displaced it. The conflict that quickly arose over control of the continent was, given its structural causes, as inevitable as anything can be in politics. Only the outcome was indeterminate.

In one sense at least, and it is all important, the parallel that may be drawn between Europe in the 1940's and the Persian Gulf today is apparent and striking. Almost as certainly as did Europe in the 1940's, the Gulf provides *the* critical source of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. What in Europe resulted from war and defeat, in the Middle East has resulted from the withdrawal of the power that once controlled the region and the subsequent refusal of the United States to fill the vacuum. In an area that was as significant for American interests in the 1970's as Europe was in the 1940's, the attempt was instead made to find local substitutes for the power this country refused to commit, whether in the form of a regional surrogate (Iran) or in the form of a progressive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict that would presumably satisfy the Arab states and leave them indebted to, and aligned with, this country. A policy that appeared more ambitious than ever when measured by the scope of its aims and the degree of its involvement was in fact rooted in a declining power position relative to the Soviet Union as well as to the states of the region. Indeed, the very ambitiousness of American policy, particularly when measured by the attempt to exclude the Soviet Union from playing a significant role in the region, reflected—paradoxically enough—a sense of growing vulnerability rather than of growing strength. Obscured for a time, the results of this policy have now been fully exposed.

WHATEVER the outcome of the crisis in the Persian Gulf, one thing at least seems reasonably clear: the present situation cannot persist. It cannot persist not because of its economic implications, grave as they undoubtedly are and will continue to be, but because of its strategic implications. The vacuum that the Gulf represents today will be filled. And since it cannot be filled by local power—including, as should now be evident to everyone, Iraq—it will be filled by outside power.

This can only mean that it will be controlled either by the United States, or by the Soviet Union, or by a condominium of the two superpowers. If it is controlled, whether directly or indirectly, by the Soviet Union, the post-World War II political structure will suffer sudden destruction. The loss of the Gulf could be expected to form an almost certain prelude to the effective end of the American position in Western Europe and Japan. Dependent as they would then be on the Soviet Union for their most vital resource, these nations would of necessity adjust their policies and actions to Moscow's wishes. Even if the Soviet Union did not immediately insist that they break their security ties with the United States, these ties would be deprived of any substantive meaning. In these circumstances, no real purpose would be served by the retention of an American security presence in Europe, even if this presence were not asked to leave. And with the breaking away of our major postwar allies, and the withdrawal of American military forces, the Chinese would have little alternative but to seek the best peace they could get with the Russians.

The consequences of Soviet control of the Persian Gulf can scarcely occasion serious controversy. What can occasion controversy is the kind of world that would emerge once American power and influence had been expelled from Eurasia and this country was confronted with the choice either of obtaining Persian Gulf oil on Soviet terms or of attempting to manage without this oil. It is commonly observed that although our allies could not survive without the oil supplies of the Gulf, we could, and presumably would, adjust to a cut-off rather than accept the terms that might well attend continued supply. Given the manner in which we have behaved toward those who now control the oil of the Persian Gulf, this confidence in our response to a Soviet Union in control of the oil is at the very least questionable. It may be that we would make the effort necessary to free ourselves of this dependency. But it may also be that we would not do so, and particularly if the new masters of the Gulf appeared to behave "reasonably." After all, a nation that has heretofore lacked the resolution either to free itself of the dependency on insecure oil supplies or to secure those supplies must leave some doubt over its conduct if once confronted with even more painful alternatives than it has so far had to face. Surely the burden of proof that we would act with the necessary resolution must be placed on those who appear so confident of our reaction. Nor should we forget that even if the required resolution were forthcoming, it would not suffice to restore positions which in the meantime had been lost. Indeed, it would be the acute realization of this loss, when taken together with an apparent "restraint" by Moscow, that might be expected to inhibit the appearance of the required resolution. These are the considerations which lead Norman Podhoretz to conclude that a world in which the Soviet Union controlled the Persian Gulf "would be a world shaped by the will and tailored to the convenience of the Soviet Union."*

* *The Present Danger* (Simon & Schuster, 1980), p. 60.

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Nor can the minimum consequences of Soviet control of the Persian Gulf be shunted aside by speculation on Soviet intentions. Even if those intentions were more benign than we could have plausible reason for assuming, the structural causes of conflict over control of the Gulf would remain. They can no more be spirited away than the causes that led to conflict after World War II could be spirited away.

Quite apart from the structural causes of conflict over the Gulf, why should the Soviets not aspire to extend their control over this vital area? Even if the Soviet state were something quite different from what it is, the aspiration to achieve a position of global preponderance would operate with a magnetic pull on Moscow's rulers, particularly if their military position were as strong as the Soviet Union's is today. That we are not dealing with "another Russia" but with the Communist Russia of today makes the consequences of the ensuing struggle over the Persian Gulf far more serious.

All this is so clear that it is tedious to place such emphasis on it. Yet the conclusions that must be drawn from the virtually self-evident still appear to escape many. And the principal conclusion is simply that the center of gravity of American interests in the world today is not to be found in Europe but in the Persian Gulf.

III

It is no criticism of the Carter administration's initial response to the events of last winter to point out that this response consisted primarily of words rather than of acts. The turning points in American foreign policy have been regularly marked by words, that is, by grand pronouncements not infrequently labeled as doctrines. These pronouncements have been significant, however much the initiated have deplored the American penchant for them. Post-World War II policy can be summarized without serious distortion by considering the doctrines that have marked its development. Thus the Truman Doctrine pointed the way to the policy of containment pursued for two decades. So, too, the Nixon Doctrine, with its promise of strategic retreat, appears in retrospect as a remarkable indication of what American policy was to become in the 1970's.

The Carter Doctrine is presumably intended to serve the same purpose as these earlier pronouncements. It may be considered as indicative of the broad outlines of future policy in the Persian Gulf region. The Carter Doctrine acknowledges our vital interest in the Gulf and declares our determination to repel by use of any means necessary, including military force, an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the region. The declaration is directed at the Soviet Union, since it is only the Soviet Union that represents "any outside force" capable of gaining control of the Persian Gulf.

The "determination" expressed in the Carter Doctrine, then, is one of countering Soviet expansion in an area of vital interest to this nation. Yet it is not only Soviet expansion that may jeopardize Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, many would argue that the principal threat to these interests in the future will come from the same forces that have formed the principal threat in the recent past. These forces have been "inside" the Persian Gulf region, not "outside." It is true that our response in past years to these inside forces has been conditioned in part by the growing strength of the outside force and to our fear of confrontation with it. In part, however, a policy that has made one concession after the other to the oil-producing countries of the Gulf has been motivated by considerations quite distinct from a fear of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Very little will have been learned from this costly policy of appeasement if it is seen in retrospect simply, or even primarily, as a function of the Soviet-American relationship.

In addressing itself exclusively to the threat held out by the Soviet Union, the Carter Doctrine leaves unaddressed the other and continuing threat. At root, this omission reflects persisting American doubt and uncertainty over the circumstances justifying the employment of force in the Persian Gulf region. Directed as it ostensibly is only against any Soviet attempt to gain control of the Persian Gulf, the Carter Doctrine obscures what should be the central purpose of policy: to preserve access to the oil supplies of the Gulf. It is because Soviet expansion into the Gulf threatens this interest that any such attempt must be opposed. But to the degree that developments indigenous to the Gulf, or very nearly so, threaten this same interest, they too must be opposed. This, at least, is the logic dictated by interest. But the United States has thus far been unwilling to accept this logic.

To date, the Carter Doctrine has found military expression in the stationing of a fleet in the Arabian Sea that includes 17 fighting ships, 7 support vessels, and an assault force of 1,800 Marines; in stationing cargo ships at Diego Garcia that would support a Marine Corps brigade of 12,000 with weapons, ammunition, and supplies; in seeking air and naval "facilities" in Kenya, Somalia, Oman, and Egypt; and in building up a Rapid Deployment Force that is based in this country and that, as its title suggests, is presumably designed to respond quickly, even preemptively, to sudden threats arising in the Gulf region.

The common characteristic of these various measures is the avoidance, so far as possible, of an intimate relationship between the states of the region and American military forces. Even in the

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case of "facilities" that a limited number of states appear ready to grant, this euphemism is indicative of the reluctance to admit a relationship now regarded as a serious political liability and one to be avoided so far as possible, despite the fact that many of those who shun the American relationship have no alternative prospect of effectively defending themselves against the Soviet Union—or, for that matter, against intraregional aggression. The American government has sought to make a virtue of the necessity thus imposed on it and to find advantages in a military disposition that is largely free of the many difficulties which result from alliance relationships and the possession of regular bases for air, naval, and particularly ground forces. In fact, these "advantages" largely define the dimensions of America's strategic dilemmas today in the Persian Gulf; they reflect the low estate to which American power has sunk in the region while making extraordinarily difficult any attempts at the effective restoration of this power within a reasonable period of time.

DO THE measures so far taken by the United States—above all, the Rapid Deployment Force—comprise an adequate response to the situation to which they are ostensibly addressed? Do they give reasonable credibility to the Carter Doctrine? If the answer depends on an existing military capability able to carry out the literal promise of the Carter Doctrine—to repel an assault on the region by any outside force —the answer must almost certainly be a negative one. Given the conventional forces the Soviet Union can presently deploy on very short notice in the Gulf, there is no apparent way these forces could be repelled by conventional American military response. On this point, at least, there is virtual unanimity of judgment among military analysts.

Moreover, very few believe the present imbalance of conventional forces can be overcome for at least several years, even assuming that the interim period is used to full advantage. Indeed, many doubt that it can ever be overcome in the literal sense of having the capability of responding in time and with forces of sufficient magnitude to make good on the promise of the Carter Doctrine. On this view, the President's declaration cannot be taken literally even as meaningful aspiration. Instead, the best that may be aspired to is a conventional capability that can impose risks of such magnitude on an aggressor as to discourage him from attacking.

It has been intimated that these risks are already imposed on the Soviet Union by virtue of the forces the United States has ready to oppose a Soviet incursion in the Gulf. But this claim is widely doubted. The naval forces in the Arabian Sea are considered by experts to be insufficient for the tasks they would have to perform, for they must be able not only to defend themselves against land-based air attack, which they are now incapable of doing, but to disrupt an attacking force with sufficient effectiveness to permit enough time for deploying ground forces. Even if these requirements could be met, however, the interventionary force would have to be of a magnitude that exceeds by far the present Rapid Deployment Force.

The problems attending the Rapid Deployment Force have generated a great deal of discussion and controversy. Where the experts disagree on so many points, the layman must pick his way with care. The effectiveness of the force will of necessity depend upon the rapidity with which it can be deployed and on its size. Even if a very small force can be deployed very rapidly, its size must severely limit the missions it can accomplish. On the other hand, a substantial force that can only be deployed over an extended period sacrifices its *raison d'être*. Finally, assuming the requirements of rapidity and size could be satisfied, the force would still meet with disaster should it not possess the logistical tail for sustained operations.

These requirement impose formidable obstacles if it is assumed that Soviet capabilities and the proximity of Soviet forces to the Gulf enable them to mount a large operation in a very brief period. Many do not grant this assumption, particularly the time element. Instead of hours, it is argued, we are likely to have a warning period of at least several days, if not weeks. But military plans cannot safely be made by making optimistic assumptions. Moreover, the longer the period of warning, the more ambiguous and uncertain it is likely to be and thus the more reluctant American officials might be to deploy the force. The quite possible brevity of the warning period creates severe problems in the absence of forces on the scene that can disrupt and delay an attack, since even if the means existed for transporting a force from its American base, the time required for transport might prove fatal.

This difficulty apart, the American defense establishment does not possess the capability at present to airlift within the period of a very few days a substantial force—let us say, a division—along with the heavy military equipment it would require for sustained operations. This equipment might be prepositioned either on land or at sea. But with the possible exception of Egypt, the other candidates for providing facilities have so far refused to permit the prepositioning of such equipment, which has in turn required a maritime prepositioning program that is both costly and more vulnerable to attack. Only in a crisis could the United States use facilities to land the large cargo planes now planned. This arrangement must not only leave open the questions of capability and time but the even more basic question of the political reliability of the countries according us facilities though not permanent leases. It would

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be rash to assume that the use of such facilities would be unrelated to the circumstances attending a crisis, not to speak of the nature of the regimes that might be in power at the time.

This is by no means an exhaustive inventory even of the principal difficulties besetting the Rapid Deployment Force. It suffices, however, to support the conclusion that for at least several critical years this force—our principal reliance in dealing with the contingencies that may await us—will remain quite modest in size. In favorable circumstances, it might be employed to forestall undesirable political change in an important, though militarily weak, oil-producing state. This change might or might not involve the Soviet Union, whether directly or indirectly, and it might well be that at the time we were required to act we would not know the extent, if any, of Soviet involvement.

Thus the principal contingency the Rapid Deployment Force might respond to is the kind that the Carter Doctrine does not address and the one over which the United States continues to manifest a great deal of indecision. The qualification *might* must be emphasized for other reasons. The Rapid Deployment Force is not visible to the states of the Gulf. It is something that must be imagined. This represents a considerable liability and not an asset as is so commonly assumed. For American power no longer commands much respect in the region. If a measure of former respect is to be restored, there must be a visible demonstration of this power, and the more impressive the demonstration the better. The restoration of American status and credibility must begin with the local states of the Persian Gulf region, that is, with the states that have managed to outmaneuver and to intimidate the Western powers for a decade. But this the United States still betrays no intention of doing, whether in the declarations Washington has made or in the measures that have so far been taken to give substance to these declarations.

IV

How, then, may one broadly characterize the American response in the past eight or nine months to the deepening crises in the Persian Gulf? In part, it has consisted of measures which leave the dangerous military imbalance in the region essentially unchanged and, more important, without much chance of serious change for at least several years. This bleak prospect is in substantial measure imposed by the force structure by which the military imbalance is to be eventually redressed. As long as we are reduced to the use of facilities, with all the conditions and uncertainties that are attached to them, there is no alternative but the route that has been taken. The route is both slow and tortuous. While it is being traversed, the interests for which the effort is made remain in full jeopardy.

Washington cannot but be acutely aware of its predicament. And being so aware, it has fallen back on an all too familiar policy: the search for a substitute for American power. The crux of America's Middle East policy for the past decade, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, thus remains largely intact. This is the evident meaning of the search for a replacement for Iran. In the spring of this year, Iraq momentarily appeared as a prospective candidate to replace the Shah's regime. That it could be given even half-serious consideration is indicative of a policy that in its now fully revealed vulnerability persists in groping at almost any straw. A radical state that is still bound by important ties to the Soviet Union, Iraq has expansionist ambitions in the Gulf which were openly avowed even before it went to war with Iran. To make of Iraq the new American pillar in the region would of necessity entail at least the partial approval of these ambitions. Else why should the regime of Saddam Hussein be attracted by an American connection?

An American attempt to replace Iran by Iraq would severely shake all the states of the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia. The move would also be met with consternation by Egypt and Israel. The historic enmity between Egypt and Iraq is as pronounced today as ever, given Iraq's leadership of the opposition to Camp David. Toward Israel, the Iraqi government continues to maintain a posture of hostility surpassed only by Libya's Khaddafi.

The Iraqi "option," if it were ever to be pursued, would thus jeopardize what assets the United States still retains in the Middle East. Less bizarre, though no less fanciful, is the recurrent talk within the American government of a policy that would seek to align the Arab states—or most of them—with the West in common opposition to Soviet designs on the Middle East. This concert of purpose, it has been suggested, might even take the form of a regional pact. Unfortunately, there is almost no evidence to support the view that the Arab states could form such a concert of purpose, given their many and persistent conflicts. And even if by some political miracle they were to do so, how would this constitute an effective response to the threat posed by Soviet power? Together, these states are not capable of even remotely balancing the power that Moscow can bring to bear on the Persian Gulf.

Among the Western Europeans a variation on the American theme has found increasing favor in recent months. Skeptical of any American design that might force the states of the Persian Gulf region to choose between East and West, they have instead found in nonalignment the more promising way of protecting the Gulf from Soviet encroachment. But a common stance of nonalign-

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ment between East and West also presupposes that the states in question enjoy a greater concert of purpose than experience suggests. And even if this obstacle is neglected, there remains the further question: how would a collective nonalignment constitute an effective response to the military power the Soviet Union is now able to deploy in the region of the Persian Gulf? In this regard, Albert Wohlstetter's comment is certainly apropos: "Western Europeans who do not feel able to manage a defense of Western Europe without a large American military presence should hardly expect the Gulf states to be able to do so."*

While a great deal has been made on both sides of the Atlantic of the differences separating the American and the Western European positions, the same logic drives both to place increasing emphasis on the need for progress toward a satisfactory settlement of the Palestinian problem. Whether the chosen policy is one of alignment to the West by means of a regional arrangement or one of collective nonalignment, the indispensable precondition for either is considered to be a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian issue.

What distinguishes the emerging Western European position is the explicitness with which the connection is now drawn, the dissatisfaction that is increasingly voiced over the Camp David process, and the changes many Western European governments now insist must be made in the Camp David framework in order that progress toward a satisfactory solution become possible. The European position assumes of course—and in this respect as well it does not differ essentially from the American position—that for both the Palestinians (in effect, the PLO) and the many interested Arab states there is a common understanding on what "progress" and a "satisfactory solution" would be. Yet almost all of the evidence we have denies this assumption. What Jordan and Egypt, and very likely Saudi Arabia, consider a satisfactory solution is something quite different from what the radical states in the area consider a satisfactory solution.

In the Western European position of today we may well be seeing the harbinger of the American position once the elections are behind us. For an American government too might reach the conclusion that the Camp David process has come to a "dead end"—to use the current European expression—and that new initiatives are necessary. Even if it should not formally abandon the Camp David framework, it might nevertheless place a great deal more pressure on the Israelis to move toward the goal now called for in effect by the Europeans —an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank that is governed by the PLO.

YET with each passing day it becomes all the more clear that a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict—assuming, for the sake of argument, this to be at all possible within the foreseeable future—would prove unresponsive to the dangers we face in the Gulf. No conceivable settlement of the Palestinian issue would materially affect the aspirations of Iraq, the continuing storm in Iran, or the deeper causes of instability in Saudi Arabia. The major internal threats to Western access to the oil supplies of the Gulf would therefore remain. So, too, the outside force that at any time might take advantage of these contingencies would also remain. A settlement of the Palestinian issue would not remove the many sources of conflict and instability in the region. Nor would it deter the Soviets from taking such action as they might take in the absence of a settlement.

From the outset of the search for a comprehensive settlement, the reasoning of those intent on obtaining it has been that without such settlement, or visible progress toward achieving it, another round of conflict in the near future is inevitable. Another round of conflict, this reasoning goes, promises a repetition of the events attending the 1973 war, only this time with results that may prove disastrous. But as the Iraq-Iran war has once again demonstrated, the contingencies that are so feared—interruption of the flow of oil and confrontation with the Soviet Union—may still arise in the absence of another round of conflict between Israel and its protagonists. Any number of events, as we should now appreciate, might lead to an at least partial cutting off of oil supplies. And any number of events might bring on extension of Soviet influence or control in the Gulf. On the other hand, so long as the peace between Egypt and Israel holds, one of the least likely prospects is another Arab-Israeli war. For without Egypt, it would be foolhardy for Israel's remaining adversaries to initiate war.

If Washington and its Western European allies are above all intent on avoiding another Arab-Israeli war, they should be doing all that is within their power to consolidate the peace achieved at Camp David. Yet by their obsession with the Palestinian problem they risk doing very nearly the opposite. If the Western states are willing to do for the PLO and their supporters what the latter are unable to do for themselves, there will be little incentive for serious negotiations. More serious still, if the West places supreme importance upon achieving what it deems to be the rights of the Palestinians, Sadat can scarcely afford to take the position of demanding less. The renewed drive that we see today for a comprehensive settlement endangers the partial settlement that must still be consolidated.

* Albert Wohlstetter, "Half-Wars and Half-Policies in the Persian Gulf," in W. Scott Thompson, *National Security in the 1980's: From Weakness to Strength* (Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1980), p. 164.

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V

THESE considerations seem so apparent that one is driven to ask why at this late date they nevertheless remain so widely resisted. What betokens, Elie Kedourie asks, "a restless and dangerous quest for schemes and combinations which, soberly considered, are both shaky and profitless: to satisfy the PLO is to satisfy the Arabs, to satisfy the Arabs is to have them on our side, to have them on our side is . . . what? To compel the evacuation of Afghanistan? To deter the Soviets? To secure the price of oil? At prices which do not irresistibly go up?"* The questions are no more than rhetorical. "The real reason for all these agitations," Kedourie rightly concludes, "is the profound reluctance of Western powers to do what is required in order to protect their own interests: namely, to make their strength visible and respected. Only they can reestablish the balance which past illusions and fecklessness allowed to be upset."

Unfortunately, the illusions and fecklessness of which Kedourie speaks continue to find expression, as the Vance speech at Harvard and the favorable reception accorded that speech testify. Stanley Hoffmann finds the former Secretary's pronouncement an "admirable" antidote to those who fail to appreciate that, in Vance's words, "increased military power is a basis, not a substitute, for diplomacy," and who believe "that America could have the power to order the world just the way we want it to be."† Given the power disposed of by the Soviet Union, Hoffmann warns, "these are the hallmarks of global calamity." And so, indeed, they are, as every sensible person would agree. They are as unexceptionable as the admonitions that diplomacy cannot be effective without adequate military power and that America is not wholly impotent in its ability to affect world order —and about as instructive.

The purpose of the Vance speech, however, was not to give the nation an introductory lesson in the conduct of foreign policy. It was to register opposition to the shift in American policy that began in the fall of 1979 and, even more, to warn against any further hardening of policy. With respect to the Persian Gulf, the Carter Doctrine must have represented the limits to Vance's endurance, else why his emphasis—otherwise certainly out of place when directed to the Carter administration —on the "dangerous fallacy of the military solution to non-military problems" and his warning that "the use of military force is not, and should not be, a desirable American policy response to the internal politics of other nations"?

Hoffmann has filled in the gaps left by Vance. In the guise of presenting the "average Western European view"—which is, in effect, his view as well—Hoffmann finds the Carter Doctrine "militaristic and simplistic." Not only does it demand that the states of the Gulf choose between East and West, thus ruling out a position of nonalignment that "constitutes the best obstacle to Soviet advances." From a yet broader perspective, the American approach is seen as neglecting "all the factors and forces, other than the military balance, that explain the predicament of the United States in the Persian Gulf and can be neither suppressed nor superseded by force alone, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, or the internal weaknesses of the Saudi regime, or the Iranian internal turmoil." It is presumably these factors more than the absence of substantial and effectively deployed and deployable military forces in the Gulf that impair the Western position and endanger Western interests.

The significance of this criticism cannot be appreciated by taking it at face value, for at face value it makes very little sense. How will collective nonalignment do what alignment cannot do? Certainly, it cannot somehow confer on the nonaligned a strength they otherwise do not have. Nonaligned, the states of the region will still remain weak, they will still be ridden with instabilities, and they will still present the Soviet Union with numerous opportunities to exploit these instabilities.

THE charge that the American approach neglects all factors and forces other than the military balance is very nearly the opposite of the truth, clearly in the past and even at present. What has been neglected is precisely the military balance. This is the major reason we find ourselves in the precarious position we do today. But suppose we were to direct greater attention and effort to these other factors and forces. Apart from the Arab-Israeli conflict, could we have more than a marginal effect on their outcome? And if it is these factors and forces that really explain the American predicament in the Gulf, then we had best conclude that our predicament is hopeless. For if one thing is certain, it is that they will persist, and probably worsen, in the years ahead.

Is this Hoffmann's conclusion? He will not admit to it. What first needs to be done, he argues, is to counter the influence of those who are obsessed with military power, who see in it a substitute for diplomacy, and who long for a return to a *Pax Americana*. Confronted with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and with what Hoffmann concedes to be the "enormous military advantages" the USSR enjoys in the Persian Gulf region, his "first imperative" of action is to declare war against those Americans who trade in "oversimplifying and hysterical interpretations of Soviet behavior" and who think of the Soviets as "ten feet tall, as manipulating countless forces in countless

* Kedourie, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

† "The Crisis in the West," *New York Review of Books* (July 17, 1980), pp. 41ff.

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countries, as devilishly clever, scheming, and successful, and *also* assert that a simple overwhelming display of military might would drive all our troubles away. . . ." Presumably, once this truly dangerous domestic adversary is silenced, the "enormous military advantages" the USSR enjoys may be seen in their proper perspective.

This proper perspective is reached by understanding Soviet interests and goals. "Any serious analysis of Soviet policies and statements," we are informed, reveals a "profound insecurity," a pervasive ambition to be "recognized as an equal superpower and accepted by the U.S. as a co-manager of world affairs with equal rights and equal say," and a determination to oblige Washington to treat Moscow as an equal, if it does not do so voluntarily. Whether this is an adequate statement of what "any serious analysis of Soviet policies and statements reveals" need not detain us here. For purposes of argument, it may be accepted. The relevant question, then, is its bearing on our predicament in the Persian Gulf. If Moscow is insistent upon "equal rights and equal say," and eager to "oblige" Washington to treat it as an equal, what does this mean for the region on which the West (and Japan) are vitally dependent and in which Moscow has "enormous military advantages"?

Hoffmann's answer is first to remind us that Soviet moves in Africa and around the Persian Gulf since 1975 are probably "in considerable part a response to our 'exclusion' of the Soviets from the Middle Eastern peace process. . . ." But even if we were to accept this dubious view, what may be said to follow from it? Are we to conclude that if we were now to reintroduce the Soviets into the peace process—thereby abandoning in effect Camp David—our predicament in the Gulf would be, if not resolved, materially eased? Hoffmann will not say. He will not even clearly say that we should now admit the USSR as a partner into the peace process, just as he will not say that we should grant the Soviets "equal rights and equal say" in general and in the Persian Gulf in particular. The reason is that "their regime violates our deepest beliefs, and its ambitions threaten our strategic, economic, and political positions."

Yet he counsels us to keep trying "to turn an adversary relationship into a mixed one" and to understand "that what is at stake is not an untenable status quo but the management of inevitable change." Only then "will the Soviet drive for status become less maniacal, more differentiated, and our resistance to it less fierce and more discriminating." And his specific prescription for getting past the immediate crisis is to explore the possibility of a bargain whereby in exchange for a Soviet commitment to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan and to accept an enlargement of the present Afghan regime we would guarantee Afghanistan's neutrality, resume arms-control negotiations on a comprehensive test ban, etc., resubmit SALT II to the Senate, move toward a speedy SALT III negotiation, and link the Camp David process—now played out—to a renewed search for a comprehensive settlement (acknowledging at the outset of the "search" the "Palestinian right to self-determination").

What is all this but a sophisticated way of proposing that we move over in those areas from which we have heretofore sought to exclude the Soviets and thereby adjust—in large part, at least—to their interests? The "untenable status quo" the changing of which will lead to the moderation of Soviet policy is a status quo that has in the past favored Western, and particularly American, interests and that in the future must prove more favorable to Soviet interests. Otherwise there is no reason to expect that change will lead to an amelioration in Soviet policy. If this in indeed the meaning of Hoffmann's advice, why not state it more directly and candidly? Why equivocate and even mislead on the issue of "equal rights and equal say"?

As for the "bargain" with the Soviet Union that Hoffmann suggests exploring, a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan cannot be secured by the promise of that country's "neutrality," for Moscow can have no confidence in a Kabul government it does not control, especially in the light of what has transpired in Afghanistan over the past year. A formula of neutralization must either insure Moscow's control, in which case the term neutrality is merely a euphemism, or it is worthless. Yet if that is indeed the meaning of neutrality in the Afghan context, how is it a "bargain" in return for which we make the other concessions Hoffmann proposes? And even if these objections are put aside, how would a "renewed search" for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict (again a euphemism since in "acknowledging the Palestinian right to self-determination" as a precondition, what is paraded as a search is in reality a settlement) alleviate, let alone resolve, our predicament in the Persian Gulf? Would the Soviets then abandon their aspirations in that region or be forced to do so because of the obstacle to their ambitions that would appear in the form of the imposing barrier of nonalignment?

At the root of Hoffmann's superficially complex analysis is something quite simple. He does not wish to redress the present imbalance of power in the only way that imbalances can be redressed—with countervailing power. At the same time he does not wish to acknowledge the possible, even likely, consequences of failing to redress the imbalance. Thus the bitterness with which he turns on those who call for redressing the imbalance.

VI

IT IS almost with a sense of relief that one turns from this kind of obscurantism to the direct and altogether candid statement

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of resignation by Walter J. Levy in his remarkable *Foreign Affairs* essay, "Oil and the Decline of the West." Levy's renown as a petroleum consultant, his long-standing acquaintance with Middle East problems, and his record of prescience in analyzing the oil crisis entitle him to be listened to with great respect.

Not known for overstatement, Levy provides an estimate of our predicament today in the Persian Gulf and of our prospects for coping with the dangers confronting us that is so bleak as to startle even the pessimist. From every perspective he considers, Levy concludes that there has been a marked deterioration in the economic, financial, and strategic position of the Western world consequent upon the oil crisis. The financial problems of recycling petrodollars even at current OPEC prices, let alone at future prices that may equal and perhaps exceed the rate of inflation, have become increasingly onerous. The circumstances that facilitated recycling in the years 1974-78 can no longer be relied on. The problem that preoccupied economists at the outset of the oil crisis—how can the world pay for OPEC oil?—has returned with a vengeance. Levy thinks it unlikely that "our national and international financial system can cope with this problem without risking sustained recessions, a slow rate—if any—of economic growth, high rates of inflation, widespread unemployment, industrial and national bankruptcies, and political upheavals."

All this still assumes that the security and availability of oil supplies—particularly Persian Gulf supplies—can be relied on. But this assumption too has now been called into serious question. For the terms imposed by producing countries for oil supplies now increasingly include political and other extraneous conditions which if not met may lead to a cut-off in supplies. And even if all economic and political terms are met, producers may, and indeed already have, arbitrarily changed the terms on which supplies are granted to consumers. Thus we have entered "a period in international oil . . . where the producing countries can have it nearly all their way; because there are no countervailing powers they have to consider. The only question they have to face is whether, because of their own interest in the economic and political well-being of their customers, it would be prudent for them to exercise self-restraint." This one-sided relationship might yet be remedied by a coordinated policy of resistance on the part of the major consumers. Instead, Levy shows, they have acted in the spirit of *sauve qui peut* and of submission.

To these now familiar threats to the security and availability of oil supplies must be added those resulting from the internal instability of most Middle East regimes (exacerbated by rapid modernization), the many intraregional conflicts, and the growing Soviet political-military presence. Levy thinks it unlikely that any of these dangers can be effectively countered, in terms of securing vital oil supplies, by the West. The forces of internal instability will work their inexorable way. The disruption of oil supplies they will give rise to is seen as beyond our capacity to affect in any significant manner.

In this respect, the Carter Doctrine and the efforts it may, or may not, presage can have no more than peripheral bearing on future events in the Gulf. For while Levy concedes that it was "absolutely necessary to state clearly our overwhelming interest in Persian Gulf oil," he finds the "real value" of the Carter Doctrine "based on the hope that the Doctrine will be accepted as credible and prove to be a deterrent to the Soviet Union—and will thus never be tested." As a means of addressing the threats held out by intraregional conflicts and by internal political instability, he considers the Doctrine to be virtually worthless. It promises to involve us in the "most difficult and probably impossible assignment" of protecting the status quo in the Gulf at a time when the status quo is under increasing challenge and to do so in circumstances where "we will probably never know whether or not there was any Soviet direct or indirect involvement." Even if we were better equipped today than we are to carry out this assignment, it would not matter a great deal since the use of force in the Gulf would be self-defeating. "The one thing that seems to be certain is that if fighting in the Persian Gulf should erupt, the first targets that will be destroyed, either by foreign or local forces, are the vital oil facilities."

Why should not these same considerations also largely negate the value of the Carter Doctrine as a credible deterrent to the Soviet Union? It turns out that Levy believes they do. "In terms of achieving U.S. policy objectives," he writes, "the Carter Doctrine might in the end prove to be as ineffective as the Nixon Doctrine policy of the 1970's. . . ."

THE Spenglerian prospects Levy holds out might be largely discounted either if the critical need for the oil of the Gulf could be substantially lessened in the years ahead or if all parties—producers and consumers, superpower rivals, etc.—determined to behave cooperatively and to take full account of each other's vital interests. But the oil dependency will persist for at least a long generation and the utopian fantasy of cooperation is just that. Thus Levy's conclusion that "we will probably be confronted by a series of major oil crises [that] . . . will set back world progress for many, many years. . . . [The] world, as we know it now, will probably not be able to maintain its cohesion, nor be able to provide for the continued economic progress of the people against the onslaught of future oil shocks—with

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all that this might imply for the political stability of the West, its free institutions, and its internal and external security."

Plainly, the Levy message is one of sheer resignation. That it is brilliantly constructed and candidly put forth cannot detract from the outlook of despair and passivity it conveys. It may be that Levy believes his message, if taken to heart, will have a quite different effect, that it will sufficiently shock his readers to provoke serious thought about their predicament and eventually help lead to resolute action. If this is the intent, it is very skillfully obscured. Instead, the message that does come through with striking force is that our situation is for all practical purposes hopeless and that there is little to be done but to resign ourselves to it and to face a forbidding future with what equanimity we can. The effects of the Levy message, then, are very similar to those of Hoffmann, and this irrespective of the considerable differences that otherwise separate them.

VII

IT is instructive to recall that at each stage of the gathering crisis that has now assumed such ominous proportions, the advocates of passivity have occupied what at the time appeared to be the prudent and "sensible" position. In 1974-75 the response to the crisis, centered then as today in the Persian Gulf, divided in the main between those who argued that there was no need to consider the reassertion of Western power in order to preserve vital interests and those who argued that although the need might exist, adequate and effective means for such reassertion did not. The former position commands much less support today than it once did. Instead, it is the latter position that is now increasingly appealed to and enjoys broad favor. Nor is this surprising, since our relative power position has markedly declined in the intervening years. If we were disadvantaged then, as so many vehemently insisted, what are we today? And if we now look back almost with nostalgia on our circumstances of 1974-75, is it possible that in 1985 we may look back with similar nostalgia on our circumstances of today?

If there is a lesson to be learned from the past six years, it is that measures to redress an ever more adverse position in the Persian Gulf region must begin from where we are and not from where we would like to be when undertaking what is admittedly an ever more difficult and dangerous task. For we may never arrive at where we would like to be, whether because where we would like to be is a reason regularly invoked for postponing doing much of anything or because while we are moving toward where we would like to be in order to act, others are moving as well. Surely we cannot safely proceed on the assumption—or rather the hope—that others will oblige us either by not moving at all or by moving at a relatively slower pace. Yet this is the assumption that some appear driven to make who, while clear on the need to redress the present imbalance, are also adamant on the need to avoid any action that might be seen by a militarily superior adversary as threatening or provocative.

Thus Paul H. Nitze has argued that since the present "correlation of forces" clearly is unfavorable to us, and whatever our efforts will remain so for the next five years at least, we must learn to conduct strategy from relative weakness.* Nitze doubts whether "there are *any* circumstances under which it would be wise for the United States actually to commit military forces in combat with Soviet forces on the periphery of the European landmass. . . ."† Given our position of vulnerability, we must take a leaf from the Communist book. The object of our policy, he has urged, "should be to throw dust in the enemy's eyes while getting on with reversing the trends and making them positive."

For on Nitze's assessment, the American position today in the Gulf resembles the Soviet position at the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. A preponderant Soviet position at the conventional level is further supported at the strategic level by Soviet escalation control. In Nitze's words: "Soviet nuclear predominance carries the implied threat of an ability to escalate a conflict up the nuclear ladder just as the U.S. predominance in the Cuban missile crisis . . . implied such a threat to the Soviet Union."

WHAT conclusions follow from this estimate? Obviously, one is, as Nitze warns, that in the present situation "we understand our limitations and the constraints on our use of military power." But the critical issue is what this understanding means in the present circumstances and where, if followed, it is likely to take us. Nitze's answer is that "there is no inherent reason, save a willful—and we hope unlikely —desire of the Soviet Union to confront us militarily in the near future, why we as a nation cannot conduct policy from an honest appraisal of our current position while refashioning our policies and forces and thus improve our position eventually to an honest parity."

It is a mystifying conclusion, given both the analysis that has preceded it and Nitze's known views about the continuing utility of military

* Paul H. Nitze, "Policy and Strategy from Weakness," in Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-56.

† Even more pointedly, he writes: "If the choice in solving our energy problem were to be viewed as one between using force in the Middle East or going without Middle East oil imports, the latter would clearly be the better choice." Given the dependence of Europe and Japan, our choice—if it be that—would issue in their necessity to subordinate their policies to the Soviet Union.

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power. Of course, the Soviet purpose in seeking a favorable "correlation of forces" is not "to confront us militarily" but to attain certain political ends largely by virtue of enjoying an advantageous military position. From Moscow's perspective, it is hoped that these ends will be secured in the shadow of preponderant military power. If not, the defenders of a status quo that the Russians wish to alter will eventually have to be confronted. Otherwise, what is the point of military power that is so largely disproportionate to defensive purposes? Certainly one may argue over the nature of the ends Moscow seeks. But even if we accept the Hoffmann dictum of what "any serious analysis of Soviet policies and statements reveals," we are left with the Soviet insistence upon "equal rights and equal say" and a willingness to make use of such advantages as Moscow disposes of to achieve this end. Nitze clearly does not so restrict Soviet policy aspirations. Yet he sees no inherent reason why we cannot use the present period to improve a position which, he believes, if openly challenged in the Persian Gulf, would have to be conceded. If this is indeed the case, there may be little policy left to conduct while we go about improving our military position.

The difficulty with Nitze's analysis is that there is no apparent connection between his strategic estimate, together with his general appreciation of Soviet policy, and the consequences he finds likely to follow from this estimate and appreciation. One can sympathize with the reluctance to draw the altogether grim consequences that would appear to follow. Even so, this reluctance has the effect of creating a startling disjunction between the estimate made of our predicament today and the consequences held likely to follow from the estimate. If the estimate is reasonably accurate, passivity can be the only prudent response in the immediate years ahead to further challenge in the Persian Gulf. That such passivity is for Nitze a necessary means of improving our strategic position rather than an end in itself (as it has been during the past decade and as many still wish it to be), cannot alter the conclusion that the intermediate-term consequences are the same. On the other hand, the refusal to accept this conclusion and, instead, to hold out the prospect—an unlikely one in any case—of being granted a period of grace by the Soviet Union during which we may, in Nitze's words, "refashion our policies and forces and thus improve our position eventually to an honest parity," can only have the effect of casting serious doubt on the estimate made of our predicament.

Is THE present danger as critical as the Nitze estimate would lead us to believe? The question is not put for rhetorical purposes. Even Hoffmann and his ilk concede that there *is* a danger. And if they find an important part of this danger to stem from "oversimplifying and hysterical interpretations of Soviet behavior," they also concede a good part of the case on which the estimate of Nitze and other of Hoffmann's domestic "adversaries" rests. It is Hoffmann, after all, who speaks of the "enormous military advantages" enjoyed by the Soviet Union in the region of the Persian Gulf, just as it is Hoffmann who acknowledges that Soviet ambitions "threaten our strategic, economic, and political positions."

The view that we are roughly in the same strategic position today that the Soviets were at the time of the Cuban missile crisis rests upon three assumptions. One appears indisputable—the very considerable imbalance in conventional forces favoring Moscow. Another is very much disputed—Soviet nuclear predominance. Still another is quite misplaced—the balance or equality of interest the two superpowers have in the Gulf. Today, as in 1962, it is the United States that enjoys the relative advantage in the balance of interest, if only by virtue of the defensive position this country has occupied, whether earlier in the Caribbean or at present in the Persian Gulf. In the case of the Persian Gulf, the predominance of the American interest is all the more apparent and compelling. By confronting us in the Gulf, the Russians would in effect confront us in Europe. By threatening our position in the Gulf, the Russians would in effect threaten our position in Europe. Indeed, by threatening our position in the Gulf, the Russians would in effect threaten our position everywhere but this hemisphere.

There is thus no "equality of interest" between the West and the USSR in the region of the Gulf, and it is dangerously misleading to assert otherwise. What to Europe is indispensable to its economic life, and to the United States is indispensable to its entire position in the world outside this hemisphere, is indispensable to the Soviet Union as the key to global predominance. Without that key, Moscow would still be able to expand its position and influence in the world. But without that same key, Washington would have surrendered almost in entirety its post-World War II position.

This asymmetry in interest is usually taken to imply a disparity in willingness to incur risks in the event of confrontation. In the Cuban missile crisis the side thus favored—the United States—also happened to be the side possessing relative military advantage at both the conventional and strategic-nuclear level. In a confrontation over control of the Gulf, would the loss of the latter advantage cancel out the advantage conferred by possession of the greater, and even compelling, interest? Clearly, it would do so if the Soviet Union enjoyed the same decisive advantage at the strategic-nuclear level that it is acknowledged on almost all sides to possess at the level of conventional forces. It is the persisting doubt and uncertainty on this point, though, that does not permit dis-

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counting the significance of the imbalance of interest. It is the same doubt and uncertainty that requires treating with caution the parallel drawn between 1962 and today.

VIII

EVEN if our position in the Persian Gulf today does not present us with a Cuban missile crisis in reverse, it is surely serious enough. Among those who believe much greater efforts can and must be made, there are nevertheless differences in view over what we should endeavor to do. We have already noted Paul Nitze's counsel that we must strive to attain an "honest parity" and that there is no good alternative to such a policy. In much the same vein, Albert Wohlstetter urges the "broad alternative of meeting a conventional threat on its own terms."

Certainly, these prescriptions are unexceptionable when judged in terms of desirability. But are they possible of realization, and particularly in the period ahead? For the critical issue confronting us is not the position we will be in by the late 1980's, important though this undoubtedly is, but how we will get to the late 1980's without disaster.

Whereas Nitze believes we can only get there by exercising extreme prudence and, though he does not explicitly so say, by luck, Wohlstetter thinks a viable conventional defense of the Gulf is possible even within this intermediate period.* The elements of such a defense, he argues, "require not merely a force rapidly deployed from the United States" but also "a continuous and politically tolerable allied combat presence . . . able to defend itself against land-based air attack and yet project enough firepower ashore to deter, delay, or disrupt an initial adversary surprise attack aimed at seizing key points on the Gulf." While the delay must be long enough to permit bringing in reinforcements by air, "the firepower and the presence required can be more modest if it is available very early," and this for the reason that an attacking Soviet force presumably would have many vulnerabilities. Thus a "greatly increased naval combat presence, able to defend itself and to project power ashore" would form the core of the presence capable of disrupting an attack and giving time for a rapid-deployment force to bring in reinforcements. Such a force would restore our credibility with the states in the area, offer them evidence for believing we could protect them against attack (whether from the Soviet Union, aggressive neighbors, or radical factions), and perhaps make them more willing to offer land facilities for alliance use. This, in turn, would be likely to open the way to stationing a "land presence as well, or at least an increased use of land bases in a crisis."

The Wohlstetter view, then, is that it is quite possible to meet a conventional threat on its own terms and that this can be done by a substantial increase in present efforts along lines indicated above. At the same time, he is quite emphatic in rejecting reliance on nuclear escalation:

> The threat of using nuclear weapons in response to a conventional incursion—of introducing a tripwire or plate-glass defense of the Persian Gulf—is likely to frighten allies, especially those in the region, more than it will the Russians. A nuclear tripwire defense in the European center becomes progressively less persuasive as Soviet nuclear strength increases at short, medium, and intercontinental range. A tripwire in the Persian Gulf is likely to be even less persuasive.

Whether Wohlstetter's strictures on threatening the use of nuclear weapons are well-taken is one thing. Quite another is whether a non-nuclear threat can be effectively dealt with on its own terms. Wohlstetter does not really argue, let alone plausibly demonstrate, that it can. What he does argue is the need for a force that, in his words, "could so increase the risks to an aggressor as to discourage him from attacking." Are the risks those of being repelled, of suffering defeat *in the Gulf*, regardless of the magnitude of the conventional incursion? Wohlstetter does not so claim, and for good reason. The force he advocates is one that might deter and, should deterrence fail, defend against certain kinds of conventional threats. But it is not against any and all such threats that the force can hold out the promise of effective defense.

AT ISSUE here is not the desirability of meeting a conventional threat on its own terms, so far as this is possible. It is instead whether a defense of the Gulf is possible against the kind of incursion the Soviets could make if they were so determined. There seems little prospect that such defense is feasible. Certainly it is not in the critical period immediately ahead. We must recognize that we cannot defend the Gulf against a determined Russian assault—not now, not in the immediate years ahead, and perhaps not ever. Beyond a certain level of conventional threat, we must either rely on the threat of responding with nuclear weapons or concede that there is no response we can make.

The case against relying on a nuclear tripwire in the Persian Gulf gains in persuasiveness by assuming that it is intended as a substitute for making a serious effort to strengthen conventional capability in the region. A strategy that relies on nuclear deterrence to the virtual exclusion of conventional defense not only encounters the now familiar problems of credibility, when applied to the Gulf it meets the further difficulty arising from the variety of circumstances which are absent in Europe but which largely define the condition of

* Wohlstetter, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-70.

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the Gulf. These familiar circumstances could well mean, as Wohlstetter points out, that the West might have the burden of initiating military action. Yet in these circumstances, a nuclear tripwire would either lack credibility or simply prove irrelevant.

What follows from these considerations is not that the threat of nuclear escalation has no proper role in a Gulf strategy, but that its role must be limited to deterring a major Soviet assault and to minimizing the otherwise corrosive effects the threat of such an assault might have over time. A tripwire policy in the Gulf cannot be expected to carry greater persuasiveness than it does in Europe. Certainly, it cannot enjoy even a roughly comparable persuasiveness if it does not have the requisite conventional-force underpinning. Intensity of interest alone cannot substitute for the commitment that must be given expression in conventional forces. Moreover, what limited experience we have points to the need for a substantial ground presence if a nuclear threat is to carry the requisite credibility.

The argument here, then, is not one of rejecting a conventional defense and relying instead on a tripwire policy. It is one of embracing both the need for a conventional defense and the need at some point for a tripwire policy. The essential goal of a viable strategy in the Persian Gulf is to fashion a conventional-force structure that can effectively deal with all contingencies that may arise short of a determined Soviet assault and that will make such assault an extremely dangerous move by virtue of the level of conventional conflict it would necessarily entail. For that level of conflict must in turn raise the meaningful prospect of nuclear escalation, a prospect we can—and should—no more attempt to disavow in the Persian Gulf than in Europe.

If we could but once achieve this goal we would have immeasurably improved upon our present position. As matters stand, however, we are very far from doing so. Nor are the prospects for achieving it promising so long as the current strategy for deploying conventional military power in the Gulf persists. For that strategy dictates the creation of a military "presence" that remains as little visible as possible to the states of the region. It requires for its success the conjurer's trick of not appearing to be where you are—or, rather, where you want to be. Unfortunately, there are limits to the military effectiveness of such magic and we see them today in the difficulties attending a Rapid Deployment Force that is intended to serve the same functions as a ground presence. Similarly, we see them in the difficulties of temporary facilities that are intended to serve the same functions as regular bases. A permanent and much larger naval combat presence than we presently have in the Arabian Sea could effectively address some of these difficulties, though by no means all. But the creation of such a presence will itself require a considerable period of time.

IX

These difficulties marking our present efforts are not inexorable. They are not dictated either by geography or by the logic of military power. They are, for the most part, preeminently political. The prevailing view is that though political in nature they cannot be altered, and certainly not in the immediate period ahead. This view is regularly advanced with all the certitude that other views about what is and is not possible to do in the region have been advanced in recent years. Given the sorry record of a policy that has largely reflected these views, it does not seem unreasonable to question what passes as the received wisdom today on the political constraints held to condition—indeed, to dictate—military strategy.

One thing, at least, seems clear. There is no apparent way by which we can conform to these constraints and still respond effectively to the deepening crisis in the Gulf. This being so, we must choose either to resign ourselves to a future over which we can have but little control or to attempt to break out of the constraints that hamper a more effective response than is currently being made.

The principal constraint results from the absence of regular bases that would permit the permanent stationing of land-based aircraft and ground forces. Ideally, these bases and forces should be located in the immediate area that must be defended, whether against a hostile coup, intraregional aggression, or a Soviet incursion. But the immediate area that must be defended is also the area considered least willing and least able to receive foreign forces. The "West Germany" of the Persian Gulf—Saudi Arabia—cannot be defended in the manner it ideally should be defended. Short of this ideal, the next best alternative is the possession of regular bases and the positioning of air and ground forces on the immediate periphery of the Gulf where they may still be considered as something closely akin to a preemptive presence.

If this next best alternative is to be realized, it can only be done with the cooperation of the two states on which a viable American policy in the Middle East will necessarily depend in the period ahead—Egypt and Israel. In the northern Sinai there are the bases which can support the forces required for an American air and ground presence that, once in place, might radically alter our present position of vulnerability in the Gulf. According to the terms of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel these bases—Eitam and Etzion—must be turned over to the Egyptians prior to the final Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai in early 1982. Before turning them over for Egyptian "civilian

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use," the Israelis are entitled to destroy, as they have recently done at Refidim in the southern Sinai, the complex infrastructure that required years to construct and without which the bases have but little military utility. As matters now stand, therefore, two of the best bases in the entire Middle East—one providing access to a port on the Mediterranean, both isolated from population centers, and both within less than 90 minutes flying time from the Gulf—will be rendered of negligible value for military purposes at a time when the American government is negotiating for limited rights of access to inferior bases both in Egypt and elsewhere.

The explanation given for this apparent madness is President Sadat's position, reiterated on a number of occasions, that Egypt must reclaim full sovereignty over the Sinai. Presumably, the American use of the Sinai bases would deny that claim, though why it should do so is left unclear. There is also the point, made by Egyptian officials, that the Israeli-built air bases in the Sinai are too sensitive politically to permit their use by American forces. But this point is not easy to follow either, unless it is simply a way of saying that the Egyptian government does not wish to appear as compromising any of its rights to the Sinai. If so, it is only a variation on the sovereignty claim, and one that might be met in a number of ways.

The point has been made by many that even if Sadat could be persuaded to agree to American use of the Sinai bases, the consequences of such agreement for his domestic position might well prove to be disastrous. To permit the stationing of American troops on Egyptian soil, it is argued, could strip the present government of its legitimacy. Sadat would presumably appear as an instrument of the United States and the betrayer of Egyptian independence. When applied to some of the Persian Gulf states, the argument carries some weight—though how much, we have no real way of knowing, despite the assurance with which it is regularly advanced. When applied to Egypt, it must be met with pervasive skepticism. There was a time not so many years ago when the presence of thousands of Soviet advisers and military personnel—stationed, it may be added, near population centers—did not deprive an Egyptian government of its legitimacy. Why should an American presence have such effect, particularly one that would be stationed in so remote an area and that—as we shall presently note—could help to implement the provisions of a treaty which has restored Egyptian territory?

Nor is this all. If the regular presence of American forces on Egyptian territory would have the consequences many believe they so clearly discern, why would not the temporary presence of forces have a similar effect? Evidently it would if this argument is to be believed. If so, then Egyptian officials are either fools and digging their own graves by permitting the Americans the use of facilities such as the Red Sea port of Ras Banas even for "certain limited purposes" or, despite their assurances, they have no intention of permitting the use of facilities in periods of crisis (a use that is reported to include the temporary stationing of ground forces). Since neither assumption seems very plausible, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the argument is a case of special pleading—clearly with respect to Egypt and very likely with respect to a number of other states in the region as well.

Although an American ground presence in the northern Sinai must be justified primarily in relation to its impact on our position in the Gulf, there would likely be important collateral advantages to be gained by its introduction. These advantages bear on the implementation of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and, beyond the peace treaty, on the prospects for progress on the Palestinian issue. The Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai is conditioned upon the establishment of certain security arrangements part of which must be carried out either by a United Nations force or, should the establishment of such force prove impossible, by a multinational force acceptable to Egypt and Israel. It is now apparent that there will be no United Nations force due to the opposition of the Soviet Union. In its place, a multinational force could be formed in which the United States would assume the predominant role. Indeed, there is no reason why such a force could not be made up from Egyptian, Israeli, and American contingents.

THE need to implement the provisions of the peace treaty thus provides the opportunity to introduce a permanent American military presence in the Sinai. The stability of this presence could be insured by the need to obtain the agreement of both parties to the treaty as a condition for its removal. It is evident that the force required to implement the arrangements called for in the treaty is not the force required to meet the various contingencies that may arise in the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent the parties from agreeing to an American contribution that is quite disproportionate to the needs of the peace treaty alone. Put more candidly, there is nothing to prevent the parties from using the treaty as a means to introduce a substantial American military presence, whether immediately or in stages.

In a broader perspective, the impact of a permanent and substantial American presence on the peace process can be no more than speculative. At the very least, however, the arrangement here suggested would go very far toward guaranteeing the peace that must provide the cornerstone for any general settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nor is it farfetched to consider that the effects of an

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American presence would go a good deal further. A permanent American commitment in the Sinai could not but in time affect the outlook of both Israel and Jordan toward the Palestinian issue. What may seem to both parties in the present circumstances an insoluble issue might take on a different appearance should an American presence once become a reliable given in their calculations. It was, after all, not so long ago that an American guarantee was seen by many observers in this country as the key that might turn the lock to an otherwise intractable conflict. This a guarantee could never do. Instead, the lock had first to be turned by others, as indeed it was turned by the dramatic sequence of events that began in late 1977. Now that it has been turned, the idea of a guarantee—or, in the form suggested here, its functional equivalent—may well become relevant, and this despite the indifference shown toward it today by those who were formerly its ardent supporters.

AT THE same time, it must be emphasized that the need for an American military presence in the northern Sinai cannot be justified primarily in terms of its prospective impact on the peace process. Even if the impact were to prove negligible, unlikely though this must be, the need would remain undiminished. For a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is an interest that cannot be compared in importance with the Western interest in insuring access to the oil supplies of the Persian Gulf. Were it not for the connection mistakenly drawn between the two, a connection made more insistently today than ever, the West would have the same modest concern with the Palestine issue that it had a decade ago. Indeed, were it not for the obsessive illusion that a settlement of the Palestine problem can provide our deliverance in the Persian Gulf, we would by now have been forced to confront the stark choice before us in the Gulf. Instead, the hope persists that the choice between conceding vital interests and moving resolutely to restore the dangerous imbalance can be avoided by a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The choice cannot be avoided, though. If vital interests are not to be conceded, with consequences even pessimists blanch at, countervailing power will have to be applied and soon. Yet there is no apparent way this can be effectively done while adhering to the constraints that at present define our efforts. The breaking of these constraints would not remove the dangers we face today in the Persian Gulf. A policy compounded in about equal measure of inadvertence and fear has succeeded in bringing us to a point where there is now no safe way out of our predicament.

Still, an extremely precarious position could be substantially improved by the introduction of a permanent land and air presence large enough and near enough to the Gulf to deal with most contingencies that might arise. There can be no assurance that the force would be employed should the need arise. But this is only to say that there can be no assurance that the prevailing policy of a decade will be once and for all abandoned. Without the required instruments to support a new policy, however, the time may well be drawing near when a change in policy will have become all but impossible.

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The Rise and Fall of Yiddish

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

"I'm always sorry when language is lost because languages are the pedigree of nations." Thus Samuel Johnson on his tour of the Hebrides. History does treat us sometimes to a nation, like the Swiss, without a common or predominant language by which to chart its pedigree, but this is the anomalous case; usually every nation or people has its own language. The Jews, being like everyone else only more so, have had more languages of their own than any other people.

The linguist who applies the scholarly methods of his discipline to a particular language can not only extract from it the data on how the spoken and written elements originated and developed, but can also—from the pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs, from shifts in stress, and from changes in verbal forms—mine information that will illuminate a larger canvas of social and cultural history. Language in this sense is the accumulated culture of the nation, and to understand it fully is to know the nation's pedigree. Such a work of understanding, a work of breathtaking scope and scholarship, has just been published: Max Weinreich's *History of the Yiddish Language.**

Max Weinreich, who was born in Courland (Latvia) in 1894 and died in New York in 1969, was a founder and director of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (originally called Yiddish Scientific Institute, YIVO being its Yiddish acronym) in Vilna from 1925 to 1939 and, after 1940, in New York. His genius expressed itself in his extraordinary passion for the Yiddish language and its culture, a passion which he tried to subdue within the straitjacket of Germanic academicism. It was not simply that Weinreich loved Yiddish; he was, as this work shows, in love with Yiddish. Through YIVO, through his teaching, and through his writing, he succeeded in retrieving for Yiddish the prestige of which it had been deprived for much of its own lifetime. In this masterwork of his, a precious legacy to those who will never know the language as he did, Max Weinreich reclaimed for Yiddish its central place in the mainstream of Jewish history.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz is the author of *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* and *The Jewish Presence*, among other works. Her new book, *The Holocaust and the Historians*, will be published by Harvard University Press next year.

With a staggering range of learning Weinreich unfolds the social history of Yiddish against a richly figured background of the history of all Jewish languages. The story he tells is fundamentally a kind of success story, the dramatic account of a language that rose as it were from rags to riches, maturing out of obscure origins in a tiny space to consummation as a full-fledged language spoken by millions throughout the world, with its own vigorous and respected literature. By means of his magisterial scholarship, Weinreich disproves the old cavil against Yiddish, that it was not a true language but only a jargon, a garbled version of German spoken by ignorant Jews. For so long regarded as the ugly duckling among languages, Yiddish emerges from this study as a graceful swan.

Though no summary can suggest the richness of Weinreich's history or do justice to its subtlety, the bare facts may be briefly sketched.

Yiddish had its origins in a small strip of territory along the Rhine and the Moselle, which the Jews in their writings then called Loter, probably from Lotharingia. The Jews who settled in Cologne, Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Trier, and Metz about a thousand years ago came from Northern France and Northern Italy. Linguistic evidence suggests that some of them were descended from Jews who had already lived in the Rhineland in the days of the Roman empire, but who had, together with the Romans, retreated to Arles in the

* University of Chicago Press, 833 pp., $45.00. The translation from the Yiddish, a heroic undertaking in view of the complex multilingual text, was done by Shlomo Noble. While the effort is admirable, the execution often falls short. The style is graceless, and the sense is sometimes obscured by a slavish literalism and by the translator's penchant for archaisms and Latinate words.

The 98-page index, prepared by Bella Hass Weinberg, combines a name-and-subject guide with an index to all the words and phrases of the many Jewish languages which appear in the text. A virtuoso accomplishment, it unfailingly located any word or topic I wanted to track down.

Astonishingly, there is no scholarly apparatus. The original Yiddish work, which the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research published in 1973, consists of two volumes of text and two volumes of notes, the latter containing bibliography, references, and additional commentary with which Weinreich presumably did not wish to burden his text. The present volume does not even direct its readers to the apparatus available in the Yiddish edition.

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5th century when the Germanic tribes began to overrun them. As the Jews spread beyond the limits of Loter, they called the whole region Ashkenaz, an old Hebrew word which they now designated to mean "Germany." They referred to themselves as Ashkenazim, in distinction to the Sephardim on the Iberian peninsula (Sepharad).

Further to the east lay Knaan, the Hebrew name for Canaan, which had now been appropriated to refer to the Slavic lands. By the 13th century, Ashkenazim were living in places where the inhabitants spoke Slavic tongues, probably Old Czech and early forms of Byelorussian, Polish, and Ukrainian. The Ashkenazic center of gravity was shifting eastward: first from Worms to Regensburg, thence to Prague and thereafter to Cracow, Lublin, and Vilna. By the 16th century, records indicate the presence of Ashkenazic Jews in Miedzyborz in the Ukraine, later to become the cradle of Hasidism. The term Ashkenazim eventually came to refer to all the Jews who were descended from those first Ashkenazim, even though the geographical center had moved. As Weinreich says, "The name Ashkenaz was stripped of its territorial connotation; geography was transformed into history."

WHEREVER the Jews had lived, they had had their own language. Hebrew is the first Jewish language we know of, and for many centuries, though no one is quite sure how many, it was the only one. But a new Jewish language pattern emerged with the Babylonian exile (586-516 B.C.E.), after the destruction of the First Temple. In Babylonia the exiles adopted the local variant of Aramaic and brought it back on their return to Palestine. Ever since then the Jews have been bilingual and occasionally trilingual.

In time Aramaic displaced Hebrew as the spoken language and became the medium through which the sacred texts were made accessible to people who no longer understood the Hebrew. From the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, public readings of the Hebrew Bible required also the reading of its Aramaic translation. But Aramaic also encroached on Judaism's sacred texts. Parts of Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic and so, of course, was the Talmud—the Babylonian Talmud in Eastern Aramaic, the Jerusalem Talmud in Western. Aramaic also intruded into the liturgy, as in the universally familiar example of the Kaddish. Finally, Aramaic words and phrases invaded Hebrew itself and in time became incorporated into post-biblical Hebrew. This merged Hebrew-Aramaic tongue Weinreich calls *loshn-koydesh,* "the sacred tongue," no longer a spoken language but reserved only for sacred texts and written communication.

The Jews who settled in German-speaking Loter brought as their linguistic baggage variants of the languages of their previous residences—Old French or Early French, Gallo-Latin or General Vulgar Latin, with admixtures of words and phrases of *loshn-koydesh* which they needed for the conduct of their lives as Jews. The encounter of these linguistic elements with the German that was then spoken in Loter launched the Yiddish era in Jewish history.

Weinreich's periodization of Yiddish looks like this:

- Early Yiddish, from the 9th century to 1250; expanding beyond Loter to the basins of the Main, the Upper Rhine, and the Upper Danube; no writings extant.
- Old Yiddish, 1250-1500; extending to the basin of the Middle Danube, to Bohemia-Moravia, Poland, and Lithuania. The Slavic element enters into the fusion of Yiddish; early writing in Western Yiddish appears.
- Middle Yiddish, 1500-1700; extending westward into Alsace, Holland, and Northern Germany; eastward into Courland. Western Yiddish, used by Jews in German-speaking lands, becomes differentiated from Eastern Yiddish; parallel dialectal systems emerge in Eastern Yiddish; elements of Eastern Yiddish penetrate into written Western Yiddish.
- New Yiddish, 1700– ; expanding into the large cities of Eastern Europe and overseas (Palestine, North and South America); the rise and flowering of written Eastern Yiddish, with the concomitant formation of a standard language and a literary culture.

The fusion of the four components that comprise Yiddish—*loshn-koydesh,* early Romance languages, German, and Slavic—entailed a continuing, cumulative, and systematic process of selection and adaptation. Fusion transformed the original elements into a distinctive language whose stress and sound system, vocabulary and word formation, syntax and grammar no longer resembled the stock languages out of which it had emerged. This process, with its high degree of linguistic systematization, produced Yiddish.

A single Yiddish word may suffice as illustration. *Shlimezalnik* means "hard-luck guy," "poor slob." The prefix comes from the German *schlimm,* "bad" or "sad." The stem comes from the Hebrew *mazal,* "luck." The suffix is a Slavic ending to designate "one who." Thus, three disparate elements from three stock languages are fused into one word which exists in none of those languages but is uniquely Yiddish.

In its millennial lifetime Yiddish became the most widely spoken of any of the Jewish languages in all of Jewish history.

WHAT made Yiddish a Jewish language, beside the fact that it was a mother tongue of millions of Jews? To this question Weinreich devotes a major chapter, surely the most original and brilliant of the whole.

Wherever the Jews migrated, they picked up the local language. In good times as even in bad, Jews were always in contact with the Gentiles among whom they lived, buying and selling, working for and with one another. The grownups gossiped to-

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gether in the streets and shops, while the children played together outdoors. To live in the community at large and to take part in its economic life, Jews had to know the language. Why then did they attach themselves to a Jewish language, to Yiddish?

Various theories have been advanced to account for the rise of Yiddish and other Jewish languages (like Dzhudezmo, the vernacular of the Sephardim). Weinreich cites Matthias Meises's seminal work, *Die Entstehungsursache der jüdischen Dialekte,* published in 1915, which concluded that the common creative force in shaping and differentiating all Jewish languages was to be found not in the oppression of the Jews, or in their specific economic functions, or in their separatism, or in their common origin, but in the powerful role of the Jewish religion.

Conscious of their obligations to worship their God in accordance with His law, the Jews regulated their lives by that law, their seasons by the Jewish calendar and its cycle of festivals and fast days. The circuit of their week differed markedly from that of the Gentiles; each of their days was punctuated by prayer at three appointed times. They sanctified their homes in obedience to the laws of *kashrut* and educated their children to go in their ways. Their way of life demanded its own language. Names were needed for ritual objects, for celebrations, rites of passage, for the operation of the entire religious system. Language was needed for the performance of ceremonial acts, for abiding by moral precepts, obeying divine commandments, and fulfilling community responsibilities. The Jews perforce created a Jewish language.

Weinreich calls this language, which became the vehicle for the diffusion of Ashkenazic Judaism, "the language of *derekh ha-shas,*" a term which he appropriates from Rashi, the illustrious 11th-century Talmudist and exegete. Rashi had used the term in its primary sense, "in the manner of the Talmud," defining a method of reasoning characteristic of the Talmud. Weinreich stretches it to apply to the whole culture of Judaism as circumscribed by the Talmud. In Yiddish this culture is called *yidishkayt.*

No single English word satisfactorily conveys the meaning of *yidishkayt.* The word "Judaism," in its contemporary connotations, is too narrow a concept. The distinguished Yiddish scholar Shlomo Birnbaum, the author of *Yiddish: A Survey and a Grammar,** defines *yidishkayt* as "the sum total of the ideas and practice of traditional Judaism." Weinreich himself, back in 1953, used the word *yidishkayt* in his text without translating it, but defined its all-embracing character in Mordecai M. Kaplan's lapidary phrase, "Judaism as a civilization." (Regrettably, Weinreich's translator renders *yidishkayt* as "Jewishness," a featureless word which commonly suggests a watered-down quality of Jewish ethnic identity and whose secular overtones drown out the resonance of religious tradition in the original Yiddish.)

As THE expression of *yidishkayt,* Yiddish exemplifies the statement of the American anthropologist Edward Sapir that "language is the perfect symbolism of experience" and that "in the actual context of behavior it cannot be divorced from action." A few random illustrations out of the profusion of Yiddish words and phrases marshaled by Weinreich show how integrally Yiddish incorporates the culture and values of *yidishkayt.* I have deliberately chosen examples from the everyday Yiddish spoken by average Jews, that is, nothing erudite or derived from learned sources.

Consider the contrast between *shabesdik,* the adjective for Sabbath, and *vokhedik,* the adjective for weekday. *Vokhedik* describes whatever is ordinary, quotidian, humdrum, and drab. *Shabesdik* always reflects the radiance of the Sabbath. *Shabesdik ongeton,* "dressed for the Sabbath," is equivalent to "in one's Sunday best," "all dressed up."

A man will present his son to a new acquaintance as *mayn kadish,* a loving term that defines the son's obligation to recite the mourner's Kaddish after his father's death. (On hearing the phrase any good Jew will respond, *biz hundert un tsvantsik,* "till one hundred and twenty," may he live until the age at which, according to Jewish legend, Moses died and which is consequently the limit of any Jew's life expectancy.)

When something happens in a twinkling, it's over *in eyn shma yisroel,* in the time it takes to say the Shema, "Hear, O Israel." When someone comes late to a party or meeting, people say: *er iz gekumen tsu aleynu,* "he arrived at *Alenu,*" the prayer recited at the end of the regular service. Something short-lived or a person without stamina is said to last *fun ester-tonis biz purim,* "from the Fast of Esther to Purim," that is, barely from one day to the next.

Kosher means something that is good, lovely, proper, rightful: *Host dos kosher fardint,* "you rightfully deserved it." *Treyf,* "impure," also means "illegitimate," "shady." *A treyf gesheft* is a shady business. *Treyfene skhoyre* may refer to forbidden goods or even stolen goods. *Pareve,* the word for food or vessels that are neither meat nor dairy, means "insipid," "namby-pamby."

When you question something, you ask: *Vu shteyt es geshribn?*—"where is it written?"—that is, what is your written authority for so doing? The expression comes from the Hebrew *kakosuv,* "as it is written," a word commonly used in the Talmud and other learned religious texts to cite the ultimate authority on any given subject or procedure. *A gemore-kop,* "a Gemara head," someone who has an aptitude for studying Talmud, is used as high praise for brains. *Dreyen mitn grobn finger,* "gesticulating with one's thumb," the stereotyped gesture of talmudic disputation, is a pejorative term, like "splitting hairs."

Finally, two expressions that embody the quin-

* University of Toronto Press (1979), 399 pp., $37.50.

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tessence of *yidishkayt. A yid iz in goles,* "a Jew is in Exile," epitomizes resigned acceptance of one's fate, the word *goles* here being used in its transcendental sense, meaning the exile of the Divine Presence from the world and consequently the Jew's helplessness in a disordered universe. Still the Jew perennially hopes to be redeemed, hopes that he will *derlebn meshiekhn,* "live to see the Messiah." In fact, at unexpected good fortune, when, for instance, Gentiles redress an injustice done to Jews, they say with indomitable optimism and at least a trace of wry humor: *Meshiekhs tsatyn,* "the days of the Messiah," the millennium has arrived.

HAVING originated and matured as the language of *yidishkayt,* Yiddish underwent an extraordinary turnabout in the last century or so when it became identified as the vehicle of Jewish secularity and secularism. The language of *derekh ha-shas* suffered the same indignities, injuries, and pressures to which the world of *derekh ha-shas* was itself exposed under the assault of modernity.

Once an organic community, indivisible as a people and a religion, the Jews were split apart by religious and class wars, and became estranged from one another by new national loyalties. Although observant Jews continued to use Yiddish as the language of *yidishkayt,* their world appeared to be shrinking and growing more isolated from the larger society, Jewish as well as Gentile. In the rush of history Yiddish now came to be appropriated by a self-reliant labor movement, committed by its revolutionary fervor to make war on Jewish traditionalism and "clericalism." The secularists took over Yiddish to reinforce their identity as an ethnic community with a political agenda.

As politics moved to the center of Jewish communal life in the 19th century and thereafter, Yiddish, invigorated by its new functions, acquired new energy. Its lexicon became enlarged and modernized, its horizons were extended far beyond the world of *derekh ha-shas.* A great Yiddish press came into being in Eastern Europe and America; secular school systems with Yiddish as the language of instruction competed successfully with government schools and also with the heder and the yeshiva. Yiddish literature and theater flourished on both sides of the Atlantic. Yiddish became the language of the working class. It was the language, too, of Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, and Peretz.

In the remarkable success of Yiddish as a secular vehicle lay the seeds of its decline. But other reckonings must first be made in charting its rise and fall. In 1939 nearly two-thirds of the world's eighteen million Jews spoke Yiddish; it was the principal language of more than half of them. It is thus not mere rhetoric to say that Yiddish did not die, but was murdered by the Third Reich. Had its speakers lived out their lives *biz hundert un tsvantsik,* Yiddish too would have survived, and Eastern Europe would have continued for some time to have nourished the Yiddish-speaking communities in America and Israel. For how long, it is idle and melancholy to speculate.

Evidence is in any case at hand that Yiddish began to decline somewhat after it became a secular language and after its function as a vehicle for *yidishkayt* was reduced. In America and even in pre-war Eastern Europe, the secular Yiddish press, the secular Yiddish schools, and modern Yiddish literature hastened rather than retarded the acculturation of the Jews to modern urban Gentile society. Yiddish as a vehicle of Jewish secularism eased the Jews' transition from the world of tradition to the world of modernity.

For the half-century that Yiddish served as an adjunct of ideologies of cultural nationalism which sprouted in Eastern Europe and were even transplanted to America, it never attained that transcendent authority with which *yidishkayt* had endowed it in an earlier age, and it never mustered the dedication which Hebrew commanded as an adjunct of Zionism. Yiddish could never become a substitute for Judaism or for a Jewish state, though probably some ideologues hoped that it would.

Nowadays sociolinguists talk of "language loyalty," referring to the immigrant's wish to retain in the New World the language of the Old Country. But the concept is artificial and sentimental. Once a language loses its function as a vehicle of systematic communication, it loses its voice. Language has never succeeded as the echo of an echo. The tiny enclaves of Yiddishists in America who believe that their "loyalty" to Yiddish will keep it alive bring to mind the groups of *Avelei Zion,* "Mourners of Zion," who continued for centuries to mourn the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. by living apart from the Jewish communities in secluded asceticism.

Though Yiddish still functions as a *lingua franca* all over the world, the irrefutable demographic fact is that fewer and fewer Jews claim it as their mother tongue or their principal language. Instead of being a living spoken language, Yiddish is now becoming a language of Jewish study. In many of today's yeshivas, Yiddish—or a macaronic Yiddish-English-rabbinic Hebrew—is the language of instruction, a key to the Talmud. In secular Jewish studies in the universities, and increasingly for the Jews as a people, Yiddish has become a key to the past. The language that a mere forty years ago was spoken by two-thirds of the world's Jews, the pedigree of the Ashkenazim, has reached the end of its era.

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Turnabout in the Senate

Joshua Muravchik

A LITTLE more than ten years ago, a change in the mood of the Senate was one of the first decisive steps in a change in American political culture. That change saw the country turn away from the postwar policy of containment toward one based on the principle, "no more Vietnams." The new turn which has been taken by the Senate during the past year may be the single most important piece of evidence yet that America is lifting itself out of its post-Vietnam trauma and moving toward a new post-Afghanistan, post-détente foreign policy.

This latest shift in the Senate's mood has already affected several areas of national-security policy. SALT II has been withheld and the restraints imposed on U.S. foreign-intelligence agencies have begun to be peeled away. But it has been most clearly expressed in the Senate's actions on defense spending.

Throughout the 1970's U.S. defense spending underwent a steady decline. Measured in constant dollars, defense outlays in FY (Fiscal Year) 1979 were 29 percent lower than they had been in FY 1969. This may be said to exaggerate the decline because the 1969 figure includes spending for the Vietnam war. But even if the Vietnam spending is discounted, the decline is still significant. Defense spending during the first five years after the U.S. combat role in Vietnam ended (FY 1974-FY 1978) was on average 11 percent lower, in constant dollars, than it had been during the last five years before the U.S. became heavily involved (FY 1960-FY 1964).

During the period of decline, a pattern developed in the Senate. The administration would introduce a defense-budget request which was ordinarily slightly less, in constant dollars, than the previous year's budget. Then the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee would, respectively, report out authorization and appropriations bills that would recommend cuts in the President's request of a few billion dollars, averaging perhaps just under 5 percent of the amount requested.* (In the House, similar cuts would be made, but usually the Senate cuts were bigger.) Then, on the floor of the Senate, each bill would run a gauntlet of amendments offered by Senate doves proposing still further cuts.

From the late 60's on, there were almost always at least a dozen such amendments and some years there were nearly two dozen, *exclusive* of the numerous efforts to curtail U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, to end the draft, or to cut U.S. aid to its Indochinese allies. The defense amendments sometimes called for an aggregate cut in defense spending by 5 percent or 10 percent or of a specified number of billions of dollars. More often they were directed at particular weapons or weapons systems. Frequent targets were the ABM system, the B-1 bomber, the F-14 and F-18 aircraft, the Trident submarine, cruise missiles, MIRV's and MaRV's, and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

Though in a few instances individual weapons were shelved or delayed, most of these amendments failed. All the across-the-board cuts were rejected. But what was noteworthy was that there were almost never any amendments aimed in the opposite direction; nor did successive administrations ever seek to recoup, on the floor, cuts to their requests which had been made in committee. Moreover, it is very likely that the committees, and even the successive administrations, were affected in their decisions by the knowledge that a team of adversaries would be waiting for their recommendations on the Senate floor, with knives drawn.

Whatever the outcome of any particular bill or amendment, there was no doubt about where the momentum lay in the defense debate. Those offer-

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* The congressional budgeting process involves three kinds of legislation. The two traditional kinds are authorization and appropriations. The authorization is a decision to approve a program in principle. The appropriation formally confers on an executive agency the authority to spend money. Only certain categories of defense spending require annual authorization—mainly weapons procurement and research. These are regarded as the more discretionary parts of the defense budget. In recent years a third step has been added: the adoption of annual budget resolutions. These encompass the entire federal budget and are designed to guide the appropriation process by balancing the allocation for each function of the federal government against that for every other.

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ing the defense-cutting amendments had, in the words of an aide to one of them, "a kind of religiosity, moralism about them—a crusading quality." On the other side those more supportive of the military often sounded defensive. Senator Henry M. Jackson, who was perhaps the most courageous opponent of the anti-military current, nonetheless could be heard to say that he, too, favored small defense cuts, but was anxious "to maintain a prudent defense posture"—not exactly blood-stirring words.

The climax of the defense-cutting era in the Senate came in 1975. That year the Appropriations Committee recommended a cut of more than $7 billion from the President's request of approximately $98 billion, while the Armed Services Committee recommended a cut of $4.9 billion, or 16 percent, from the authorization for that part of the defense budget which goes for weapons and research. Then, on the Senate floor, some 15 different roll-call votes were held on amendments to cut further from those already sharply pared bills. Some of these amendments succeeded, including one offered by Senator Edward M. Kennedy to dismantle the single ABM site allowed under the SALT agreements, and another offered by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey to forbid the flight-testing of MaRV's (the next phase in technology magic after MIRV's) until the Russians had flight-tested them first.

Also in 1975, the Congress adopted legislation requiring an evaluation by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of any significant new weapons being proposed, and stipulating too that all requests for weapons authorizations include "a complete statement analyzing the impact on arms control and disarmament policy and negotiations."

In 1975, as well, the Senate, in an exceedingly rare action, defeated the conference report on the defense-authorization bill. The House had cut the President's request a bit less severely than had the Senate. The conferees had agreed to split the difference and reported back a figure some $800-million higher than had been provided by the Senate bill. By a vote of 48 to 42 the Senate repudiated its conferees, insisting that it would not compromise on its defense cuts.

SOMETHING else interesting occurred in the Senate in 1975. At the initiative of Senators Cranston and Kennedy, the Senate agreed to set aside two days, at the beginning of its consideration of the defense-authorization bill, for a general discussion of post-Vietnam foreign policy. Senate doves had often complained that U.S. defense policy seemed divorced from clearly stated foreign-policy goals. The "Great Debate," as those two days came to be called, was designed as a partial remedy for this.

As it turned out, the "Great Debate" provided a forum for critics of the military to set forth the case for cuts in defense spending. Thus:

Senator Birch Bayh said that all Senators "are anxious to have an adequate defense" but that it was important to "realize the enormity of the destructive force [already possessed by the U.S.] and the degree to which it goes beyond what we really need."

Senator Patrick Leahy complained that in considering defense bills, "We lose sight of the fact that we already have . . . enough weapons to kill every, man, woman, and child on this planet, and do it 27 times."

Senator John Glenn spoke of his opposition to the B-1 bomber, saying that "we are already so far above anything we need with respect to ICBM's, and likewise the Russians, that to talk about needing another weapon to deliver nuclear weapons is, to me, wishful thinking of the highest order."

Senator Gary Hart asked whether the policy of maintaining a "triad" of strategic forces "has gotten to be almost gospel in doctrine" without good reason.

Senator Mark Hatfield excoriated the United States for its "fanatical desire to always be No. 1 in the ability to kill people in war."

Senator Adlai Stevenson offered the thought that "the weakness of the United States is not caused by insufficient arms but by insufficient wisdom."

Senator Claiborne Pell shared this story with his colleagues:

> What is the threat from the Soviet Union? . . . We do not know for sure. I remember when we had a conversation . . . with Mr. Kosygin in the Soviet Union. He was very concerned as he talked about the need for roads, automobiles, and consumer goods. He was very much concerned about the influence of his generals and his admirals on the course of policy in his country. It occurred to me . . . that hawks and doves are not confined to the United States alone.

Finally, there was Senator John Culver. A month before the "Great Debate," Culver, a former Marine, had described the $4.9-billion, or 16-percent, cut made by the Armed Services Committee as too small, and insisted that another $5 billion be cut from the committee's $25-billion recommendation. Deploring that fact that "we have obscene overkill capacity that is totally unconscionable and unjustifiable," he had argued that "we must cut $10 billion out of the defense budget as a minimum if we are going to improve upon the combat readiness and the true, genuine national-security posture of this nation." Now, in the "Great Debate," he warned that "nothing causes more ambiguity in foreign policy than a defense structure that is artificially high, redundant, or unnecessarily provocative."

The cuts did not go deep enough to satisfy Cul-

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ver, but when all was said and done, in 1975 defense outlays for FY 1976 were the lowest, in constant dollars, that the U.S. Treasury had made since before the Korean war.

THE defense debate in the Senate died down in 1976 and 1977, perhaps because 1976 was a presidential election year and 1977 was the beginning of a new President's term in office. Then in 1978 came an interesting straw in the wind. The Senate, in considering the resolution setting budget targets for FY 1979, voted down two amendments seeking cuts in defense spending, the smaller cut by a vote of 70 to 21. That such amendments should be offered, and rejected, was commonplace in the Senate. What was new was what happened next. Senator John Tower offered an amendment to *increase* the defense budget. His amendment lost by a vote of 74 to 21. But in losing, Tower demonstrated that now as many Senators were willing to vote for defense hikes as for defense cuts, with the majority in between. Although the momentum in the defense debate was not yet on the side of the hawks, it was evidently no longer running with the doves.

The real turning point in the Senate came in mid-1979. It was not inspired by a single event, but rather by the Senate's deliberations over SALT II and the trends of which many Senators became aware in that process. According to a Library of Congress study entitled *Congress and Foreign Policy—1979*:

> Perhaps the primary impact of Congress on foreign policy during 1979 was to force into the open a major debate on the adequacy of U.S. strategic and defense posture. . . . It was Senate consideration of the SALT II treaty, and the raising of doubts as to whether it should be ratified, that brought the strategic issue to the forefront of public discussion. . . .

In the course of the SALT II debate something close to a consensus emerged, not on whether to ratify the treaty, but on the underlying trends. An aide to one of the Senate's most prominent doves put it this way:

> The SALT hearing did something interesting. . . . The discussions very quickly became technical—the heavy missiles, verification, the Backfire bomber. One by one, a lot of the weight went out of those issues as a means of arguing the treaty down, but in the process a lot of Senators and a lot of the people testifying found they were learning from each other about just what was our strategic strength [and] where we were heading. [There was] a general admission on both sides that indeed we were falling behind.

As a result, the traditionally dovish Foreign Relations Committee said, in reporting the SALT treaty favorably, that "additional defense efforts by the United States will be necessary to preserve deterrence and essential equivalence in the 1980's and beyond. The committee believes that recognition of this need is one of the most important results of the SALT debate."

One of the first expressions of the change which was occurring came in July 1979 when Senator Jackson offered a series of amendments to the Export Administration Act designed to prevent the transfer to the Soviet Union (or other unfriendly countries) of technologies which can be used for military purposes. Although this purpose sounds unexceptionable, the issue is a complicated and controversial one. The problem does not arise with blatantly military technologies, but rather with civilian industrial technologies adaptable to military uses, such as precision ball-bearings essential to MIRV's or computers which can guide missiles. Nor are possible military uses of civilian industrial technologies always self-evident. There is a gray area in which the goal of preventing the transfer of militarily useful items conflicts with the goal of encouraging exports, and therefore the issue becomes largely one of the direction in which to err.

In 1974 Jackson had offered an amendment to the defense-authorization bill which would have shifted much of the authority to control exports from the Secretary of Commerce to the Secretary of Defense, thereby giving security considerations priority over commercial ones. Jackson's amendment was opposed and finally defeated by those who believed, as then Senator Walter Mondale said he did, that "it would return us to some of the more negative days of the cold war." Five years later, in 1979, Jackson offered amendments to the Export Administration Act designed to achieve the same purpose as his 1974 amendment. This time, although he was opposed by Senator Stevenson, the manager of the bill, he amassed enough support to force a compromise by Stevenson leading to language in the bill which would give the Secretary of Defense a much larger hand in the export-licensing process.

BUT the Senate's shift on the issue of technology transfer was only a faint hint of what was to come two months later, when it voted on amendments to the second budget resolution for FY 1980. Spurred by the debate over SALT and by relentless reports of the Soviet military build-up, the White House and the Congress (even *before* Iran and Afghanistan) had come to agree on the need for greater defense spending by the President. Yet while Carter had joined the other NATO countries in a pledge of 3-percent real growth in defense spending, his proposed FY 1980 budget allowed for much less.

This failure to meet the 3-percent growth target inspired Senator Ernest Hollings, with the support of Senator Sam Nunn, to bring to the floor an amendment to raise the congressional budget

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guidelines for defense. Hollings's amendment had two parts. The first raised the ceiling for FY 1980 to allow for a full 3-percent real growth, and the second provided for 5-percent real growth in the defense-budget targets for FY 1981 and FY 1982. The administration decided on a strategy of supporting part one and opposing part two of the Hollings amendment. Part one passed the Senate by a resounding vote of 78 to 19. Part two was opposed on the floor vigorously by the then Budget Committee Chairman, Edmund Muskie, and by Armed Services Committee Chairman John Stennis, and it was also opposed in the lobbies by the administration. Yet it passed by a vote of 55 to 42, thus adding $35 billion to the defense-budget guidelines for the first three years of the new decade.

By an amazing coincidence, this almost exactly matched the total amount the Senate had voted to cut out of the budgets requested by successive administrations throughout the entire previous decade. Needless to say, the $35 billion which the Senate proposed to add to defense spending during the years 1980-82 was not worth the same as the $35 billion it cut during the 1970's. And as it turned out, the rising rate of inflation, especially for fuel costs, eclipsed even the numbers specified in the Hollings amendment. By the beginning of 1980, when the administration presented its proposal for the defense budget for FY 1981 and beyond, it sought dollar amounts *higher* than those of the Hollings amendment. The administration's proposal, however, provided for less real growth. But if a high rate of inflation served to cloud the issue, it could not obscure the fact that passage of the Hollings amendment had signaled a profound shift in the politics of the defense budget in the Senate.

In 1980, after events in Iran and Afghanistan had added their impact to the Senate's already toughening mood on national defense, Senator Hollings resumed the offensive. The revised request by the administration called for $164.5 billion in budget authority for defense in FY 1981. In the Budget Committee five motions were offered. One, by Senator Donald Riegle, would have provided $1.4 billion less than that. It received only two votes, those of Riegle and Senator Nancy Kassebaum, of the eighteen members voting. Then, Senator Joseph Biden offered a motion embodying the administration's request; this only succeeded in adding Biden's vote to Riegle's and Kassebaum's.

Finally Hollings and Senator Pete Domenici offered a motion allocating nearly $10 billion more than the administration's figure, and providing real growth of perhaps as much as 10 percent (though about half as much growth in outlays).* By a margin of 10 to 8, the Hollings/Domenici motion carried, handing Senator Muskie his biggest defeat in his tenure as Budget Committee Chairman. Two other motions were defeated before the Hollings motion passed. The one which came closest to passing would have provided even higher defense levels than the Hollings/Domenici motion did!

As a result of the Budget Committee's action, the Senate adopted a budget resolution calling for about $12.6 billion more in the FY 1981 defense-budget authority than was in the budget resolution passed by the House. By the time a House-Senate conference was held, Senator Muskie had become Secretary of State and Hollings had acceded to the chairmanship of the committee. That meant that Hollings led the Senate delegation in the conference. Perhaps as a result, the conference agreed on a defense figure only $2.1 billion below that of the Senate and $10.5 billion above that of the House. The House defeated this conference report and a second conference was held. The second conference reduced the defense figure a mere $0.8 billion and this figure passed both houses.

The Budget Committee also adopted a nonbinding five-year projection for defense budgeting which called for a cumulative increase over the administration's five-year defense plan of $117.6 billion in budget authority and $95.2 billion in outlays.

PERHAPS the most dramatic evidence of the Senate's new mood on defense spending came in June and July 1980 when it considered the FY 1981 defense-authorization bill. Though the authorization bill covers only about 30 percent of the total defense budget—that part which goes for weapons procurement and research and development—it is the part which has, over the years, been the focus of greatest controversy. The President's revised request for FY 1981 was $46.9 billion. This was about 6 percent more in constant dollars than President Ford's request of $29.9 billion for FY 1976. But whereas the Senate Armed Services Committee cut the FY 1976 request by 16 percent, it voted to increase the FY 1981 request by 11 percent, or $5 billion. Then it made some amendments to the administration's military-manpower proposals which will result in an increase of about another billion dollars. The committee reported this bill by a vote of 16 to 1. The only negative vote was cast by Senator Carl Levin who, however, ended up voting for the bill on the Senate floor.

* The federal budget is considered in two categories: Budget Authority and Outlay. Budget Authority means assuming a debt. Outlay means writing the check. Because many weapons take years to build from the time they are ordered, and because they are not paid for in full in advance, the amount of money the Defense Department contracts to spend in any year is different from the amount it actually spends. This is true for all other branches of government as well.

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Senator Culver voted for the bill in committee although he appended a single sentence to the committee's report explaining that while he believed the bill contained "excessive funding for certain projects," he was voting for it so that "the full Senate could work its will."

Yet when the bill reached the floor the normally feisty Senator Culver offered no amendments to cut the projects which he regarded as excessively funded, or even to identify which exactly these projects were. (There was something else curious about Culver's explanation. The Senate surely would work its will on defense authorizations irrespectively of how Senator Culver, or any other Senator, voted in committee on a particular bill. Unlike treaties or new substantive laws, it is simply not within the realm of possibility that the defense-authorization bill would die in committee, thereby putting the U.S. armed forces out of business.)

When the bill reached the floor, Senator Stennis presented it as "a new start . . . in the extensive build-up of our military services, all four of them, on a rather broad front." He added that "we must begin on a comprehensive military modernization program." This call for rearmament met no opposition. On the contrary, it was widely endorsed and applauded.

Senator Hart (he who in the "Great Debate" of 1975 had challenged the policy of maintaining a triad of strategic forces) told his colleagues that "I support the bill strongly" and that "a consensus is emerging that we must improve our defense capabilities."

Senator Glenn (he who in 1975 had attacked the idea that we needed more strategic weapons) said that "we must immediately begin to shore up our national defense," and added that "we have been woefully remiss in allowing our military preparedness to erode to its present unhappy state."

Even Senator Culver, once the scourge of the military, took the floor not to attack the bill but rather for a genteel colloquy with Senator Nunn. Culver observed that "it is remarkable how much consensus there is between us [i.e. himself and Nunn] and on our committee as to what we really have to do to strengthen our military capabilities." Nunn replied with the remark that Culver "has been the leader in making sure that . . . the MX is not diluted and is not jeopardized. He is . . . largely responsible for the committee's coming out with a very strong position on the MX." (The committee's vote on the MX was unanimous.)

Not a single amendment was offered to cut even a dollar from the committee's recommendation, despite the fact that the bill contained funding for many weapons which had been controversial in the past, and that it added many items which the administration opposed, such as deploying 100 additional Minutemen III ICBM's in place of Minuteman II's and reactivating an aircraft carrier and a battleship currently in mothballs. A few amendments which were offered to countermand committee recommendations were all formulated so as to shift funds from one defense category to another, carefully avoiding any reduction in the total allocation.

WATCHING the deliberations on the defense-authorization bill, a veteran observer of the Senate might have felt disconcerted by the strangeness of it all. If so, he probably would have been reassured when he saw Senator George McGovern rise to offer an amendment. He would have felt even more encouraged to learn that McGovern's co-sponsors were Senators Mark Hatfield, William Proxmire, and Gaylord Nelson, altogether as steadfast a quartet of defense cutters as the Senate has known. Here, at last, would be a familiar ritual. But the observer's hopes would have been disappointed. The McGovern-Hatfield-Proxmire-Nelson amendment did not seek to cut the authorization, but to increase it! The purpose was to add some millions in order to double the size of education bonuses available to those who enlist in parts of the Reserve and thereby to improve the quality of the Reserve forces. It almost seemed that the doves were seeking a "non-militaristic" way of joining in the new pro-defense spirit.

Such dissension as could be observed regarding the defense-authorization bill tended to come more from those who thought it was too small than from those who thought it was too large. The two ranking Republicans on the Armed Services Committee made it clear that they supported even bigger increases but settled for the committee's $6-billion add-on as a "start." Senator Tower said: "My personal assessment—and one that I believe is shared by a majority of the committee and, in fact, the Senate—is that we should be doing more." Senator Strom Thurmond expressed the opinion that "it is imperative that the United States undertake to increase defense spending at an annual rate of 10 to 20 percent."

There were also some amendments offered and passed in favor of greater defense efforts. One, by Senator Domenici, increased funding for development of an ABM missile-defense system, the deployment of which would entail abrogation of the only existing SALT treaty. Domenici's amendment was adopted by voice vote.

So was Senator Thomas Eagleton's amendment entitled "Enhanced Civil-Defense Program." While it adds no new funding in FY 1981, it requires the President "to develop and implement a civil-defense program" designed "to enhance the survivability of the American people and its leadership in the event of nuclear war and thereby to improve the basis for eventual recovery" and "to enhance deterrence and to contribute to percep-

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tions of the overall United States-Soviet strategic balance and crisis stability, and to reduce the possibility that the United States might be susceptible to coercion by an enemy in times of increased tensions."

In the end the Senate adopted an FY 1981 authorization about 40 percent larger in real terms than its FY 1976 bill. The vote on final passage of the bill was 84 to 3.

In casting the sole vote in committee against the authorization bill, Senator Levin said, in his printed dissent: "[This] is not to say that I do not believe that some reasonable increases are justified above the President's Fiscal Year 1981 defense budget request."

Thus the politics of defense within the Senate have come to a point at which President Carter's proposed 3-percent real growth is a baseline which both hawks and doves agree is too low. From here, the debate will be about how much more than this is necessary.

AMONG the questions which now present themselves are whether the Senate will continue on this new course during the next few years and whether it will be joined by the House. The answer to both questions is yes.

There are three reasons for predicting that the Senate's new mood is more likely to deepen than to dissipate in the early 1980's. First, it is being fed by powerful wellsprings of public opinion. The Harris Survey reported in June 1980 that when Americans were presented with a list of twenty areas of federal spending and asked which ones they would wish to see cut, defense spending came out nineteenth. Social security was the only other category which fewer respondents wished to cut.

The implication of these findings is confirmed by other surveys. NBC News/Associated Press surveys show that in the early months of 1980 support for increased defense spending ranged from 55 percent to 74 percent while support for decreased defense spending ranged from 5 percent to 13 percent. The highly respected National Opinion Research Center (NORC) provides additional evidence. In 1980, as in previous years, NORC asked people whether the United States is spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on the military. In 1973, 12 percent of its respondents said "too little" and 40 percent said "too much." In 1978, 29 percent said "too little" while 24 percent said "too much." In 1980, 60 percent said "too little" while only 12 percent said "too much."

Whether the Senate led the public, the public pushed the Senate, or whether the Senate and the public reached similar conclusions separately is unclear. What is clear, however, is that the new mood of the Senate parallels a new mood among the electorate, and the two are bound to be mutually reinforcing.

Second, the Senate's shift on defense legislation was accompanied by changes in the Senate itself. Some of the most powerful doves of the 1970's, notably J. William Fulbright and Mike Mansfield, were gone, and new powers were emerging in the Senate's defense debates. Republican Senator Bob Packwood recently described the hawkish Democrat Sam Nunn as the man "who will soon inherit the mantle of both Senator Jackson and Senator Stennis as the military expert in the Senate." And one hawkish wag recently said that "The finest thing Senator Muskie ever did for the security of this country was to accept the position of Secretary of State . . . and let Fritz Hollings take over the Budget Committee." On the other side of the aisle, John Tower became ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee in 1977 and began using this as a platform from which to campaign for defense increases even larger than those the Senate eventually adopted.

In addition to new leaders, the Senate also had acquired a new group of gadflies—those whose bills and speeches were designed less to alter today's decisions than to shape tomorrow's agenda. The role of gadfly on defense matters had formerly been played by McGovern, Hatfield, and Proxmire; in the last few years, it began to be played by Garn, Wallop, and Helms. The Center also began to shift. A number of Senators whose voting records in the mid-70's had been dovish voted regularly for higher defense spending during the past year. Some of these claimed consistency with their records despite the evidence, but others (Ford, Huddleston, Packwood, Durkin, and Hart) frankly acknowledged that their thinking had changed. A number of freshman Senators also began taking strongly pro-defense positions. These included not only Republicans and Southerners, but such non-Southern Democrats as J. James Exon of Nebraska, Dennis DeConcini of Arizona, and David L. Boren of Oklahoma.

Third, the very terms of debate now seem to ordain that the pro-defense atmosphere will intensify. If there is not yet a consensus on the solutions, there is now something close to a consensus on the problem: how to strengthen America's political and military position. Given that definition of the problem, the laws of political momentum or of human psychology all but guarantee that the debate will favor those proposing stronger measures. From the time President Nixon, early in his term, agreed that the question was not whether the U.S. ought to be in Vietnam, but only how to get the U.S. out, the doves dominated the debate on Vietnam. Now that it has been agreed that the question is not whether the military trends are adverse to the U.S. but only how to correct this, the hawks will remain on the offensive and the doves will be, as Senator McGovern recently complained is already the case, "constantly on the defensive."

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THE House has already begun to join in the new mood of the Senate. In May 1980, the House took up the FY 1981 defense-authorization bill. The House Armed Services Committee reported out a bill authorizing $53.1 billion for defense. This was $6.2 billion more than the administration requested, an increase of 13.2 percent, probably the largest committee add-on to a defense-authorization bill in history. The committee's recommendation was even $1.2 billion *higher* than the amount which the Senate Armed Services Committee recommended and the Senate adopted a month later.

The increases in the defense bill were denounced by the administration when the bill reached the House floor. Yet despite the administration's opposition, the House passed the committee bill by a vote of 338 to 62. Not a penny was cut from the bill on the House floor. In contrast to past years, only two amendments aimed at cutting the bill were offered. One, which would have delayed the MX missile, was defeated by a 2 to 1 margin. The other, a trivial matter, was defeated in a voice vote. The action on the defense bill provided a strong indication that the mood which took hold in the Senate last year has begun to spread to the House.

The 96th Congress has changed the direction of U.S. defense policy, insofar as that policy is set on Capitol Hill. The 97th Congress which will convene next year can be expected to take up the work of restoring America's defenses weakened by years of neglect. Whether it can accomplish all that needs to be done remains to be seen.

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The Posthumous Victory of Albert Camus

Stephen Miller

THE life of Albert Camus, who died twenty years ago in an automobile accident, reads like a 19th-century French novel in which the young man from the provinces conquers Paris. The son of poor, working-class French Algerians, raised by an illiterate, half-deaf mother of Spanish extraction (his father had died in World War I), Camus by the age of thirty-one had become a hero of French culture: the author of an esteemed first novel, an active participant in the Resistance, and the editor-in-chief of *Combat*, the major underground newspaper of the war. According to Germaine Brée, "Camus's rapid rise to celebrity between 1942 and 1945 is unparalleled in the history of French literature." A friend of Malraux, Gide, and Sartre, Camus had indeed conquered Paris.

In the ensuing decade and a half, Camus went on to conquer England and the United States as well. When he died, Henri Peyre noted that "no writer from the Old or the New World has been mourned in English-speaking countries with the same intensity of grief as was Albert Camus in the first weeks of 1960." If to the educated public he had become a kind of lay saint, the conscience of his generation, to young writers he was the model of what a writer should be—less, perhaps, because of his work than because of the way he looked. Gazing out from pictures on dust jackets, a half-smile on his face, a cigarette dangling from his lips, he was the man of action as well as the intellectual, tough and cynical yet courageous and sensitive. In his inevitable trench coat, he was Humphrey Bogart as French man-of-letters.

At the time of his death, Camus's reputation was certainly inflated, as he himself would have been the first to admit. He claimed to dislike his public persona and complained in an interview a year before his death about those who praised his honesty, conscience, and humanity—"you know, all the modern mouthwashes." He was also dissatisfied with his own work, and said in 1958 that "I still live with the idea that my work has not even begun." Yet the air went out of his reputation even faster than might have been expected. By 1966, H. Stuart Hughes was uttering a commonplace when he said in *The Obstructed Path* that Camus's prose "was already beginning to sound dated." At the end of the decade, a shadow hung over his work; though he still had fervent admirers, the consensus among *bien-pensant* intellectuals was negative: Camus was an uneven novelist and a muddled thinker.

Behind this verdict lay a political judgment: Camus had squandered whatever talents he had in becoming, as Conor Cruise O'Brien argued in 1970, an obsessed cold warrior as well as, indirectly, an apologist for colonialism. These objections were offered more in sorrow than in anger. Camus's choice, O'Brien said, "wrong as we may think it politically, issued out of the depths of his whole life history." David Caute, too, attributed Camus's literary and political confusions to his ancestry and upbringing. Thus, the conqueror of Paris was himself vanquished in the end by followers of that quintessential Parisian intellectual, Jean-Paul Sartre, who detested Camus's politics.

But if, ten years after his death, Camus's reputation was under a cloud, now, twenty years later, the cloud is beginning to lift because of the profound change in French intellectual life wrought by the revelations of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. With the reigning Marxist orthodoxy under serious challenge for the first time in thirty years, Camus is once again being taken seriously. In this country too there is a renewed interest in his work. Both the *Notebooks* and a collection of essays have been reissued in paperback, and a new edition of his writings,* edited and with interpretative essays by Robert E. Meagher, has also come out. In addition, a biography of Camus appeared last year by Herbert R. Lottmann,† an American writer who lives in Paris. Perhaps the time has come for a new look at Camus's work and for an attempt to reassess his achievement in the light of the last two decades.

Unfortunately, both Lottman's biography and Meagher's collection are bad starting points for such a task. The biography, though readable and well-written, is, if anything, too rich in detail. Lottman did a great deal of field work, tracking

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* *Albert Camus: The Essential Writings*, Harper Colophon Books, 322 pp., $5.95.

† Doubleday, 753 pp., $15.95.

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down innumerable friends and foes of Camus and exhaustively recording what they had to say. But the result of all this research overwhelms not only the reader, but the subject as well. We see Camus not just up close, but too close, as in a pointillist portrait, with too much detail and not enough outline. So taken up is he with the drama of Camus's life that Lottman pays hardly any attention to clarifying and questioning his ideas.

If Lottman's portrait of Camus is blurred, Meagher's is—to put it mildly—retouched. For what Meagher has given us is not so much Camus himself as *his* Camus—a "timeless Mediterranean" thinker floating somehow above the events of his own period. He has cut Camus's work into bits and pieces—the novels included—and made of them a three-course meal of his own devising. The book is composed of three sections: Sisyphus, Prometheus, and Nemesis, with each section introduced by the editor, whose pretentious and muddled writing takes up at least one-third of the book. All this cutting-and-pasting is intended presumably to display Camus to best effect, but the liberties taken with Camus's text give us a distorted picture of his work. It is true that Camus himself was entranced by the notion of a "Mediterranean mind," but this was only one aspect of his thought, and it is drastically overstated here. Meagher is a fervent admirer of Camus, whom he regards as a dialectical thinker of the first order and a man who "knew and felt with the sure grasp of silent instinct what required to be said." But he has done Camus an enormous disservice by presenting him in this way.

Interestingly, Conor Cruise O'Brien, despite his hostility to Camus's politics, is a more reliable guide to Camus than Meagher is. He too divided Camus's work into three parts in the study he did for the Modern Masters series (1970), but his ordering makes sense because it is closely tied to the events of the time, events which shaped Camus's intellectual "progress" directly. Camus was very much a writer of his time, and only by keeping a close eye on the political and intellectual climate of the 1940's and 1950's can we arrive at a clear sense of his achievement.

By 1941, when he was twenty-eight, the first phase of Camus's work was completed. It includes *Caligula*, a play; the extended essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*; and, of course, the novel, *The Stranger*, indisputably Camus's most popular work. *The Stranger* is an uneven novel—marred, I think, by the shift in tone between its two parts. Part I is full of luminous detail about the daily life of an easygoing and laconic young man dedicated to the joys of physical life, attractive both in his desire to lead an uncomplicated life and to be true to his feelings. Suddenly in Part II, this same easygoing youth, having committed a gratuitous murder, is transformed into a profoundly cryptic individual who stubbornly refuses to save his life by uttering conventional pieties. Camus later explained the actions of Meursault, the protagonist, by saying he "is animated by a passion that is deep because stubborn, a passion for the absolute and the truth." But the Meursault of Part I has no trace of such heroic severity, and, in fact, casually tells a lie to help a passing acquaintance out of a jam. Thus the novel seems disconnected, and also peculiarly dismissive—though this is seldom remarked upon—of the murder itself.

Why has it been so popular? O'Brien is probably right in his view that "the main secret of its appeal lies in its combination of a real and infectious joy of living, with a view of society which appears to be, and is not, uncompromisingly harsh." The novel celebrates life as absurd—that is to say, as having no intrinsic meaning. The only "meaning" to existence is the sensual enjoyment to be derived from it. If this sounds superficial, there is also a tragic dimension, insofar as death hangs over us continually. Camus said in his *Notebooks* at the time he was writing *The Stranger*: "No one who lives in the sunlight makes a failure of his life." So the novel exhorts us to live in the sunlight, and to revolt against those who invoke sentimental pieties in order to make sense out of human existence. The novel is popular with young readers because they are especially apt to resent the pieties of their elders, and also, no doubt, because these rather shallow propositions sound philosophically "deep." Yet in effect, the novel merely tells us in a roundabout way that by invoking the magic word, Absurd, we can tell everyone to go to hell and run off to the beach—a notion which is obviously quite exhilarating, and makes life very simple indeed.

The Myth of Sisyphus, which Camus started soon after he finished *The Stranger*, is a theoretical exposition of these same ideas: the universe may be devoid of meaning, but the recognition of this meaninglessness is inspiriting. Man can then "decide to accept such a universe and draw from it his strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation." But whereas *The Stranger* has some fine moments of novelistic detail—especially the opening scenes, when Meursault attends his mother's funeral—*The Myth of Sisyphus* is tedious in its neo-Nietzschean banalities and murky observations which sometimes sound like a Woody Allen parody ("For everything begins with consciousness, and nothing is worth anything except through it"). In any case, by the time Camus finished *The Myth of Sisyphus* he was ready to jettison the notion of the Absurd, for the German occupation of Paris had suddenly given life meaning. Camus soon came to realize that the Absurd has nothing to teach us about how to conduct ourselves in the face of real danger—the Nazis, for example—and his *Notebooks* make it clear that by 1942 he had abandoned the notion. Ten years later he admitted

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that "this word 'Absurd' has had an unhappy history and I confess that now it rather annoys me."

The main work of Camus's second phase was *The Plague*, which he began in 1941 and worked on intermittently for the next five years—his time taken up with work in the Resistance and editorial chores at *Combat*. In this phase, Camus was preoccupied with the problem of action in the face of overwhelming odds, action that necessarily required the cultivation of trust among men who had every reason to distrust each other. The Nazis dispatched members of the Resistance summarily, so that a man's life was held in the balance not only by a small circle of friends but also by many others in the Resistance whom he might not even know—men who might betray their compatriots on any number of grounds, torture being the most obvious. One of Camus's most moving essays is the introduction he wrote to the *Poésies Posthumes* of René Leynaud, a friend in the Resistance who had been caught by the Nazis and executed. *The Plague*, a novel that is in many ways about the problem of fraternity, has as a central scene the moment when Rieux and Tarrou go for a swim "for friendship's sake." The swim over, the narrator remarks that "they dressed and started back. Neither had said a word, but they were conscious of being perfectly at one, and the memory of this night would be cherished by them both."

There is, though, something wooden about this fraternal moment, as there is about the entire novel. O'Brien calls *The Plague* "a great allegorical sermon," but the allegory is both too obvious and not obvious enough. The novel is an allegory of France under the Occupation, but it is not clear how a city in the throes of plague can stand for a country controlled by a foreign army. Or, to put it another way: French conduct during the war years raises questions that cannot be dealt with through this metaphor, among other things because infectious organisms behave in a uniform way, whereas the soldiers and administrators of an occupying army do not. As one critic has said, *The Plague* "is neither deeply rooted in the real stuff of life nor in the poetical matter of myth." The novel is inert, its characters little more than walking editorials in favor of courage, common decency, fraternity, and so forth. Camus himself was unhappy with it, calling it a "tract," and writing in his *Notebooks*: "*Plague.* In my whole life, never such a feeling of failure. I am not even sure of reaching the end." In any case, by 1946, when he raised these doubts, his mind was elsewhere. A new problem was preoccupying him, the problem of liberty. He had already begun notes for a book he would not finish until five years later: *The Rebel.*

CAMUS'S *Notebooks* reveal that he began thinking about the problem of liberty in 1945. Under the heading of "Revolt," he says: "Finally, I choose liberty. For even if justice is not realized, liberty maintains the power of protest against injustice and keeps communication open." The tension between liberty (or freedom) and justice is the subject of *The Rebel.* At first, Camus had believed that the two could be reconciled, but as the Resistance years receded into the past, he became aware that many people he had been close to and to whom he still remained attached were fervent in their desire for social justice but less inclined to defend freedom. They were driven by a concern for the collective rather than for what Camus called "individual fates," and were therefore very susceptible to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's argument, in *Humanism and Terror* (1947), that Stalinist violence, though not to be condoned, should be regarded as a passing phase in a society moving in the direction of social justice. In other words, since the Soviet Union was marching toward social justice, it would be wrong to dwell on the fate of particular individuals who were being mistreated, even killed, along the way. Doing so could only serve to undermine a progressive regime, and indirectly to aid reactionary ones. In the late 40's, it should be noted, Merleau-Ponty, as managing editor of Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes*, was an influential figure, and this line of reasoning became the standard justification on the French Left for suppressing anti-Stalinist criticism. (A few years later, when the evidence of Stalin's purges was no longer arguable, Merleau-Ponty disavowed his earlier work, left *Les Temps Modernes*, and broke with Sartre.)

Camus himself wrote for Sartre's magazine and moved in the same circles as those intellectuals inclined to think well of the Soviet Union. Friendship between Sartre and Camus was still possible, for Sartre's position had not yet hardened, and he had even publicly criticized Stalin's forced-labor camps, for which he was attacked by the French Communists. By 1950, however, after the Korean war broke out, Sartre called the United States the greatest obstacle in the way of "the salvation of mankind," and decided to submit, as an act of self-discipline, to total acceptance of the Soviet viewpoint, though he would still insist at times that he was not a Marxist.

But though Sartre and Camus were political adversaries in the early 1950's, it is a mistake to assume that their positions were antithetical—that if Sartre embraced Marxism-Leninism and defended the Soviet Union, then Camus must have embraced capitalism and defended the United States. In fact, Camus had nothing good to say about capitalism and clearly disliked the United States. His basic sympathies were with the non-Communist Left, especially the Spanish syndicalists and anarchists, among whom he had many friends, but his politics were always inconsistent: though he considered himself a socialist, he also harbored strong anarchist tendencies and tended to distrust all governments.

In one thing, however, he remained constant: he was a passionate defender of liberty, and in

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1950 he saw that the greatest danger to liberty came not from the Right but from the Left. In two plays written in the late 1940's—*State of Siege* and *The Just Assassins*—Camus had touched upon the totalitarian mentality often concealed behind what in his *Notebooks* he called a "mania for virtue," but *The Rebel* constitutes his most fully developed attack on those who dream of a society based on absolute justice.

The Rebel is Camus's most ambitious book, and it suffers from its ambitiousness. Attempting to provide a complete anatomy of rebellion in all its aspects, *The Rebel* zooms all over the landscape of European intellectual history, with Camus in the role of tour guide, making sweeping generalizations about entire historical epochs and coming in the end to the lame conclusion that the ultimate good is a sense of limits—a view supposedly characteristic of that "Mediterranean mind" of which Meagher is so enamored. Despite such mystifications, however, there does exist at the core of the book a well-argued essay against the notion that the sins of Russian Communism should be excused because the Soviet Union is on the right historical track. Camus goes even further, arguing that Russian Communism and German fascism have much in common—both despise "bourgeois" democracy, for one thing—but that Russian Communism is even more dangerous to the world since "the German revolution had no hope of a future" while Russian Communism, by contrast, "openly aspires to world empire. That is its strength, its deliberate significance, and its importance in our history."

Camus, it should be stressed, is not arguing here that the idea of social justice should be dismissed altogether, but that the notion of absolute justice advanced by Marxist-Leninists is a formula for tyranny. Two sentences sum up the book: "Absolute freedom mocks at justice. Absolute justice denies freedom."

IN THE complicated politics of the early 1950's, Camus's book was well received by parts of the French intelligentsia and condemned by other parts. In the West in general, disenchantment with the Soviet Union was growing at the time. *The Rebel* has much in common with two other books published in the same year, Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and Eric Hoffer's *The True Believer*, both of which made it clear that the Soviet Union had forfeited any claim to being called "progresisve." Even in France, the break between Merleau-Ponty and Sartre had reawakened interest in Camus's point of view, so that his book received good reviews in a number of French journals. (Maurice Nadeau in *Combat*, for example, said it marked a turning point in French intellectual life.) But just as Camus was arguing that Russian Communism not only enslaved people but also threatened world peace, anti-Communism was getting a bad name because of its association with the Right—specifically Senator McCarthy. How the viewpoint espoused by Camus might have fared in the absence of McCarthyism is anybody's guess, but as it was, many—perhaps most—French intellectuals, though no longer eager to defend the Soviet Union, thought it at the very least in bad taste to dwell on the evils of Russian Communism. Anti-anti-Communism was the order of the day.

Sartre in the early 1950's was more straightforward, a defender of the Soviet Union who despised anti-Communists. "An anti-Communist is a dog," he said in 1952. "I shan't change my mind on that score; I never will." He was working at the time on a long essay, "The Communists and the Peace," in which he would declare his allegiance to the proletariat and his faith in Marxism-Leninism—citing Lenin twice to the effect that bourgeois democracies, controlled as they are by bankers and stockbrokers, are totally fraudulent. In 1952 Sartre also had the difficult task of assigning a reviewer for Camus's book. Despite political differences, the two were still on reasonably good terms and Sartre had, in fact, published a chapter of *The Rebel* in his magazine. Nevertheless, the review that finally appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* by Francis Jeanson, one of Sartre's fervent disciples, was scathing; Jeanson accused Camus of accomplishing an "objectively" reactionary task by attacking Marxism-Leninism, and to prove it he cited the favorable reviews Camus had received not only in the bourgeois press but also in a right-wing journal that was an organ of *Action française*. Stung by the review, Camus replied in a long letter that appeared in the August 1952 issue, along with a response from Sartre himself, commenting both on the particular charges made in Camus's letter and on Camus's politics in general.

THUS, the famous break between Camus and Sartre, which was an event not only in France but in the world press as well. In Parisian intellectual circles, as both Lottman and Jean-François Revel have said, Sartre was considered the winner of the debate—not necessarily because his position was sounder, but because his arguments were more dazzling. Camus, it was said, had been writing about things he did not understand; unlike Sartre, he lacked training in German philosophy. The Lottman biography describes poignantly how the staff at Gallimard, where Camus worked as an editor, agreed with Sartre and could find no word of consolation for Camus when—foolishly—he asked for their opinions.

Camus was devastated by the break with Sartre, which is puzzling. Given his views, it is hard to believe Camus could have remained friendly with the man who could say in 1954, upon his return from a visit to the USSR: "The freedom to criticize is total in Russia. Contact is broad, open, and as easy as possible. In Russia a man is aware

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of the constant progress of his own life as well as social life. Intellectual and collective interests coincide." But Camus valued friendship intensely—especially the friendship of comrades from the old Resistance days—and he brooded incessantly over the break.

There is no denying that Camus's own performance in the debate could have been better. Unlike his adversary, he had not mastered the intricacies of the Marxian dialectic, nor was he lucid and rational by temperament, as was Sartre. Beyond that, he was hurt, so his argument about the Communist Left's idolatrous view of history was marred by a note of injured pride; he accused the reviewer of attacking his person as well as his ideas, and complained that Jeanson had merely served as a hatchet man for Sartre. Sartre, on the other hand, far from sounding aggrieved, was even-tempered, almost benevolent. He began by recalling the Camus of the early days, the brilliant young novelist and Resistance hero ("how we loved you then"), and went on to rebuke him in the tone of a reasonable teacher compelled to chide a favorite pupil for irresponsibility. Camus, he said, had deserted history by failing to take sides; his position was a luxury the human condition could not afford. "If you really want to stop a popular movement from degenerating into tyranny, don't begin by condemning it out of hand and by threatening to retire to the desert. . . ."

Sartre said that Camus had no right to criticize the Soviet Union because he had, in effect, opted out. "In order to earn the right to influence men who struggle, one must first participate in their struggle; one must first accept many things, if one wants to change others." Why have you, Sartre asked sorrowfully, "condemned yourself to condemn"?—a rhetorical ploy which made Camus seem like a child having a temper tantrum. The ploy was obviously effective, and Camus never quite got over it, but the truth is that Sartre, however skillfully, was simply invoking once again that same tired justification Camus had so carefully attacked in *The Rebel*: the judgment of history which would supposedly vindicate the crimes of the present. Camus was speaking out of experience when he said a few years later that "the Right is not brilliant, but the Left is in complete decadence, a prisoner of words, caught in its own vocabulary, capable merely of stereotyped replies, constantly at a loss when faced with the truth. . . ."

THE last eight years of Camus's life, following the break with Sartre, may be said to constitute a fourth and final phase of his career: he was embittered by the break and haunted by the war in Algeria, but despite long periods of depression, he did work through to a freer prose that is less stilted and pompous than his earlier writing. In several short essays and stories, he is more concise and witty than ever before, and his last and best novel, *The Fall*, successfully combines the earlier lyricism with a new and mordant irony.

About Camus and Algeria there is little to say except that Camus refused to accept the notion that Algeria belonged only to the Muslims. His homeland was Algeria, and he never felt completely comfortable in Paris (which he once described as "a wondrous cave" whose inhabitants, "seeing their own shadows reflected on the far wall, take them for the only reality there is"). His hope was for reconciliation. As a young journalist, he had written a series of articles denouncing the government's treatment of the Arabs and he still had many Arab friends. In 1956, at some risk to his life, he went to Algiers to plead for a civilian truce, or at least for an end to urban terrorism. His plea, of course, fell on deaf ears, and after that he refused to speak out on Algeria.

Camus was not an apologist for colonialism, but he was unrealistic in his hope for an Algerian state in which two nations—one French and Christian, the other Arab and Muslim—could live together in harmony. It was an impossible hope, as is implied even in his own fiction, where Arabs are invariably depicted as mysterious and vaguely threatening.

Perhaps even more than his anti-Communism, it was Camus's position on Algeria that separated him from the mainstream of French intellectual opinion at the very time he was being lionized in England and the United States. Camus's awareness of the inconsistencies of intellectual fashion—he was "guilty" in France, "innocent" in England and the United States—no doubt contributed to the making of *The Fall*, a novel that takes place in foggy Amsterdam, a place where land, sea, and sky are jumbled together, a landscape without landmarks that stands for moral and intellectual confusion.

The Fall is a bleak novel, yet a curiously exhilarating one. Laced with witty observations about the perversities of human conduct, it is very much in the French *moraliste* tradition, a descendant of Montaigne's *Essays*, La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*, and Diderot's novella, *Rameau's Nephew*. The narrator, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, is a fascinating character, a self-proclaimed "empty prophet for shabby times" who subtly and ingeniously confesses his own moral failings in order to avoid being judged by others. "The more I accuse myself," he says to his silent companion, "the more I have a right to judge you. Even better, I provoke you into judging yourself, and this relieves me of that much of the burden."

Some critics have regarded Clamence as a self-portrait, an attempt by Camus to exorcise the burden of his supposed "sainthood"; others see it as a portrait of Sartre, the man who continually proclaimed his own guilt over belonging to the bourgeoisie. But whoever sat for it, this portrait of a twisted hero of our times, who perverts notions of

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Christian guilt in order to maintain his own sense of self-esteem and to dominate others, is Camus's masterpiece. It is also a fascinating, extended gloss on Lionel Trilling's observation that "the life of competition for spiritual status is not without its own peculiar sordidness and absurdity."

But in the end, Camus's literary achievement is secondary to his importance as a political intellectual. Today, it is no longer so clear that Sartre was the winner in that debate with Camus which, in the words of Germaine Brée, may come to be regarded as "the ideological centerpiece of our time." Ultimately, Camus came under attack not so much for being an anti-Communist—many French intellectuals conceded the merit in anti-Communism as an intellectual position—but rather for being a *political* anti-Communist, that is, one who allegedly exploited the fear of Communism to promote reactionary ends. But this charge is a travesty of Camus's position. In fact, he detested regimes of the Right, especially Franco's, and far from being "obsessed" with anti-Communism he was quite meticulous about explaining why, as between the tyranny of Right and Left, he saw the Left as the greater danger.

If anything, the term obsession applies more to Sartre than to Camus, for as he admits in his autobiography, Sartre was driven by a hatred of the bourgeoisie that knew no bounds, a hatred which led him not only to ridicule parliamentary democracy, but also to advocate violent revolution. "Irrepressible violence," he says in an introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, "is man re-creating himself." True, making sense of Sartre's politics was never easy, since he played an elaborate verbal game which enabled him to support the Soviet Union while at the same time remaining outside the Communist party. To assuage his guilty conscience as a bourgeois, Sartre advocated Leninist tyranny, but to himself he granted the "bourgeois liberty" to write as he pleased. In the 1950's Sartre was, as Nicola Chiaromonte pointed out, an "amateur Communist": one who considered himself "objectively" a Communist insofar as he embraced the proletarian cause, but "subjectively" a free man since he did not obey any order from above. No wonder Camus did not understand the Marxian dialectic; or, rather, understood it only too well.

In a study written for the Modern Masters series, Arthur Danto has praised Sartre for having led "one of the exemplary lives, a paradigm of commitment and courage as well as creativity, full of positions taken and fine causes promoted and hideous ones opposed." Thus has the anti-anti-Communist line become the standard academic judgment. To this one may oppose Solzhenitsyn's view of Sartre; in the third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* he notes that in 1954 "another progressive Frenchman, the writer Sartre, arrived in Moscow to join in the life of our progressive society." Never has the word "progressive" been invested with such withering irony.

In summing up Camus's importance, it is almost enough to say simply that he never joined those "progressive" French intellectuals on their shepherded journeys around the Soviet Union. Camus was not an original philosopher, and it would be foolish to make great claims for the profundity of his work. But he was a perceptive political journalist who was one of the first French intellectuals to recognize that the central debate was not between capitalism and Communism but between liberty and tyranny. And he was one of the first also to question the notion that poor people do not care about freedom. As he said in a seminal essay, "Bread and Freedom": "The oppressed want to be liberated not only from their hunger but also from their masters, since they are well aware that they will be effectively freed of hunger only when they hold their masters, all their masters, at bay."

Camus was instrumental in rallying intellectual opinion to the defense of democratic liberties at a time when many Western intellectuals were reluctant to believe anything ill of the Soviet Union. To paraphrase Orwell, he was a man who struggled constantly to see what was in front of his nose —to see what many Western intellectuals tried, and still try, desperately not to see.

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Joseph and His Brothers

Robert Alter

ALTHOUGH we are accustomed to think of the narrative sections of the Bible as sacred history, I would like to propose that it is at least as useful and as accurate to view them as prose fiction. Such a conception, of course, entails an emphasis on deliberate artistry and even playfulness that may seem a little odd according to common notions, both popular and scholarly, of what the Bible is. The ancient Hebrew writers, or at least those whose work has been preserved because it was eventually canonized in the biblical corpus, were obviously motivated by a sense of high theological purpose. Habitants of a tiny and often imperfectly monotheistic island in a vast and alluring sea of paganism, they wrote with an intent, frequently urgent awareness of fulfilling or perpetuating through the act of writing a momentous revolution in consciousness.

It is clear enough why the Prophets should have used poetry, with its resonances, emphases, significant symmetries, and forceful imageries, to convey their vision, for prophetic poetry is a form of direct address, heightened and made memorable through the rhetorical resources of formal verse. But biblical narrative, by contrast, if it is also to be construed as a kind of discourse on God's purposes in history and His requirements of humanity, is indirect discourse on those subjects (the one great exception being the Book of Deuteronomy, which is cast in direct discourse as Moses' valedictory address to the people of Israel). The degree of *mediation* involved in talking about what the Lord requires by making characters speak and by reporting their actions and entanglements opens up what may seem to the moralistic theist a Pandora's box. For would it not be frivolous on the part of an anonymous Hebrew writer, charged with the task of formulating sacred traditions for posterity, to indulge in the writerly pleasures of sound-play and word-play, of inventing vivid characters with their own quirks and speech habits, of limning with all the resources of stylistic ingenuity the comic frustration of a failed seduction, the slow diplomatic progress of bargaining over a burial site, the wrangling of brothers, the foolishness of kings?

If it nevertheless seems to me perfectly plausible to assume that the makers of biblical narrative gave themselves to these various pleasures of invention and expression, that is because, whatever their sense of divinely warranted mission, they were, after all, writers, moved to work out their vision of human nature and history in a particular medium, prose fiction, over which they had technical mastery and in the manipulation of which they found continual delight. I think such an inference is amply confirmed by the actual texts that the biblical writers produced, though for some readers it may require an act of mental reorientation to see a closer generic link between Genesis and *Tom Jones* than between Genesis and the *Summa Theologiae* or the kabbalistic *Book of Creation*.

This notion, however—of the biblical writers' vocation for fiction—needs to be amplified. If fiction is a form of play, it is also, even in ultimate instances of flaunted playfulness, like *Gargantua and Pantagruel, Tristram Shandy,* and *Ulysses,* a form of play that involves a particular mode of knowledge.

We know through fiction because we encounter in it the images the writer has projected out of an intuitively grasped fund of experience not dissimilar to our own, only shaped, defined, ordered, probed in ways we never manage in the muddled and diffuse transactions of our own lives. The figures of fiction need not be verisimilar in an obvious way to embody such truths, for exaggeration or stylization may be a means of exposing what is ordinarily hidden, and fantasy may faithfully represent an inner or suppressed reality: Uncle Toby and Mr. Micawber, Panurge and Gregor Samsa, are vehicles of fictional knowledge as much as Anna Karenina and Dorothea Brooke. What I should like to stress is that fiction is a mode of knowledge not only because it is a certain way of imagining characters and events in their shifting, elusive, revelatory connections but also because it possesses a certain repertoire of techniques for telling a story.

The writer of fiction has the technical flexibility,

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for example, to invent for each character in dialogue a language that reflects, as ordinary discourse would not necessarily reflect, the absolute individuality of the character, his precise location at a given intersection with other characters in a particular chain of events. The writer of fiction exercises an even greater freedom in his ability to shuttle rapidly between laconic summary and leisurely scenic representation, between panoramic overview and visual close-up, in his capacity to penetrate the emotions of his characters, imitate or summarize their inner speech, analyze their motives, move from the narrative present to the near or distant past and back again, and by all these means to control what we learn and what we are left to ponder about the characters and the meaning of the story. (In nearly all these regards, a more formulaic mode of storytelling like the folk tale or even some kinds of epic has a more limited range of possibilities.)

THE biblical authors, I would contend, were among the pioneers of prose fiction in the Western tradition, and it seems to me that they were impelled to the creation of this new supple narrative medium at least in part because of the kind of knowledge it could make possible. The narrators of the biblical stories are of course "omniscient," and that theological term transferred to narrative technique has special justification in their case, for the biblical narrator is presumed to know, quite literally, what God knows, as on occasion he may remind us by reporting God's assessments and intentions, or even what He says to Himself. The biblical Prophet speaks in God's name—"thus saith the Lord"—as a highly visible human instrument of God's message, which often seems to seize him against his will. The biblical narrator, quite unlike the Prophet, divests himself of a personal history and the marks of individual identity in order to assume for the scope of his narrative a godlike comprehensiveness of knowledge that can encompass even God Himself. It is a trick done with narrative mirrors: despite anthropomorphism, the whole spectrum of biblical thought presupposes an absolute cleavage between man and God; man cannot become God and God (in contrast to later Christian developments) does not become man. And yet the self-effacing figures who narrate the biblical tales, by a tacit convention in which no attention is paid to their limited human status, can adopt the all-knowing, unfailing perspective of God.

The biblical tale might usefully be regarded as a narrative experiment in the possibilities of moral, spiritual, and historical knowledge, undertaken through a process of studied contrasts between the variously limited knowledge of the human characters and the divine omniscience quietly but firmly represented by the narrator. From time to time, a human figure is granted special knowledge or foreknowledge, but only through God's discretionary help: Joseph can interpret dreams truly, as he repeatedly affirms, only because the interpretation of dreams is the Lord's. Various of the biblical protagonists are vouchsafed promises, enigmatic predictions, but the future, like the moral reality of their contemporaries, remains for the most part veiled from them, even from an Abraham or a Moses who has been privileged with the most direct personal revelation of God's presence and will. Dedication to a divinely certified career of visionary leadership is itself no escape from the limitations of human knowledge: Samuel the seer mistakes physical for regal stature in the case of both Saul and Eliab, and has to undergo an object lesson in the way God sees, which is not with the eyes but with the heart—the heart in biblical physiology being the seat of understanding rather than of feeling. Human reality, perhaps most memorably illustrated in the cycle of stories from Jacob's birth to his death in Egypt with Joseph at his bedside, is a labyrinth of antagonisms, reversals, deceptions, shady deals, outright lies, disguises, misleading appearances, and ambiguous portents. While the narrator sees the labyrinth deployed before him in its exact intricate design, the characters generally have only broken threads to grasp as they seek their way.

We are never in serious doubt that the biblical narrator knows all there is to know about the motives and feelings, the moral nature and spiritual condition of his characters, but he is highly selective about sharing this omniscience with his readers. Were he to invite our full participation in his comprehensive knowledge, in the manner of a discursive Victorian novelist, the effect would be to open our eyes and make us "become like God, knowing good and evil." His decision is to lead us to know as flesh-and-blood knows: character is revealed primarily through speech, action, gesture, with all the ambiguities that entails; motive is frequently though not invariably left in a penumbra of doubt; often we are able to draw plausible inferences about the personages and their destinies, but much remains a matter of conjecture or even of teasing multiple possibilities.

All this, however, is not to suggest that the Hebrew Bible is informed by the epistemological skepticism of fiction like James's *The Turn of the Screw,* Kafka's *The Castle,* or Robbe-Grillet's *Jealousy*. There is a horizon of perfect knowledge in biblical narrative, but it is a horizon we are permitted to glimpse only in the most momentary and fragmentary ways. The narrator intimates a meaningful pattern in the events through a variety of technical procedures, most of them modes of indirection. In the purposeful reticence of this kind of narration, the characters retain their aura of enigma, their ultimate impenetrability at least to the human eyes with which perforce we view them.

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At the same time, however, the omniscient narrator conveys a sense that personages and events produce a certain stable significance, one which in part can be measured by the varying distances of the characters from divine knowledge, by the course through which some of them are made to pass from dangerous ignorance to necessary knowledge of self and other, and of God's ways.

THE preeminent instance of biblical narrative as a fictional experiment in knowledge is the story of Joseph and his brothers, for in it the central actions turn on the axis of true knowledge versus false, from the seventeen-year-old Joseph's dreams of grandeur to his climactic confrontation with his brothers in Egypt twenty-two years later. This theme of knowledge is formally enunciated through the paired key words, *haker*, "recognize," and *yado'a*, "know," that run through the story (the French *connaître* and *savoir* may indicate the distinction between the terms better than these English equivalents).

Joseph is, of course, the magisterial knower in this story, but at the outset even he has a lot to learn—painfully, as moral learning often occurs. In his early dreams, he as yet knows not what he knows about his own destiny, and those dreams which will prove prophetic might well seem at first the reflex of a spoiled adolescent's grandiosity, quite of a piece with his nasty habit of tale-bearing against his brothers and with his insensitivity to their feelings, obviously encouraged by his father's flagrant indulgence. The heretofore shrewd Jacob on his part is just as blind—and will remain so two decades later—as his old father Isaac was before him. He witlessly provokes the jealousy of the ten sons by his unloved wife Leah and by the concubines; then he allows himself to be duped about the actual fate of Joseph, at least in part because of his excessive love for the boy and because of his rather melodramatic propensity to play the role of sufferer. Finally, the ten brothers are ignorant of Joseph's real nature and destiny, of the consequences of their own behavior, of the ineluctable feelings of guilt they will suffer because of their crime, and, climactically, of Joseph's identity when he stands before them as viceroy of Egypt. Events, or rather events aided by Joseph's manipulation, force them to knowledge and self-knowledge, this arduous transition providing the final resolution of the whole story.

It may be instructive to look closely at this grand climax of the Joseph story, not only because it illustrates so vividly the connections between fiction and knowledge but also because, with the author's extraordinary technical virtuosity, these episodes provide a splendid synthesis of the various artful procedures of biblical narrative. The entire conclusion, from Jacob's dispatch of the ten brothers to Egypt in order to buy food to their second return to Canaan when they inform their father that the long-mourned Joseph is alive and ruler of Egypt, is one tightly interwoven whole, but it is unfortunately too long to examine here verse by verse. A close reading, however, of Chapter 42, which reports the brothers' first encounter with Joseph in Egypt together with their return to Jacob in Canaan, should give an adequate idea of the complex interplay of narrative means through which the writer renders theme, motive, and character. Since this chapter is not a relatively self-contained unit, but rather the first movement in the climax of the story, I shall then proceed to comment briefly on how what is artfully articulated here is continued, developed, brought to a resolution in the next three chapters.

Jacob, we should recall, has been out of the picture entirely since the end of Chapter 37, when his sons brought him Joseph's blood-soaked tunic and he drew the expected catastrophic conclusions from it. At that juncture, the sons merely asked him to recognize the garment, while, in a paroxysm of grief, he did most of the talking. Now, twenty-two years later and after two consecutive years of severe famine, Jacob does all the talking:

> 1. Jacob saw that there were emergency provisions in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, "Why are you staring at each other?" 2. And he said, "Look, I have heard that there are emergency provisions in Egypt. Go down there and get us provisions from there so that we may live and not die." 3. Then Joseph's brothers ten went down to get provisions of grain from Egypt. 4. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob did not send with his brothers, for he thought he might meet disaster. 5. Thus the sons of Israel came to get provisions among the others who had come, for the famine had reached the land of Canaan.

Jacob sees that there is grain to be bought in Egypt, while his sons for the moment seem to be looking only at each other, an apt introduction to the series of events in which they will be forced to confront one another over their past actions. What is even more prominent as an introductory note is the fact that this segment of the story starts with the brothers inactive, made the object of a rebuke. There is a hiatus of silence between verse 1 and verse 2, between "Jacob said" and his saying again, a silence that tends to confirm Jacob's charge that his sons are simply standing there staring at one another when urgent action has to be taken.

The brothers then follow their father's command, in virtual or actual silence, and the narrator is careful to inform us that they are ten when they go down to Egypt, for the exact number of the brothers, indicating who is present and who is absent, will be important in what ensues. Though the ten are quite naturally identified as "the sons of Israel" when they arrive in Egypt, emissaries of their patriarchal father, as they set out they are called "Joseph's brothers." They are headed, of course, for an ultimate test of the nature of their

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brotherhood with Joseph, a bond which they have denied by selling him into slavery and which they will now be forced to recognize in a new way. When Benjamin is designated "Joseph's brother," the phrase means something different genealogically and emotionally, for he is Joseph's full brother, the only other son of Rachel. There is, then, a delicate play of implication in verses 3 and 4 as we move from "Joseph's brothers" to "Joseph's brother" and "his [Benjamin's] brothers," and this interplay brings into the foreground the whole vexed question of fraternity soon to be dramatically resolved. We are told nothing of the ten brothers' response to their father's withholding of Benjamin, a repetition of the privileged treatment he once gave Joseph. The denouement will in fact hinge on their ability to accept with full filial empathy this special concern of their father's for his remaining son by Rachel.

AT THIS POINT, the narrator, in the characteristic rush of biblical narrative to the essential moment, catapults the brothers from Canaan to Egypt and into the presence of Joseph. The central narrative event will now be rendered, as the Hebrew writers typically do, through dialogue, though each of the succinct interventions of the narrator is tactically effective and thematically revealing, beginning with the ostensibly superfluous observation about Joseph's status that opens this section. Here is the entire account of the brothers' first visit to Egypt, up to the point where Joseph will give the command for their money to be slipped back into their packs.

6. And Joseph was the vizier of the land, it was he who dispensed provisions to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him, their faces to the ground. 7. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, and he played the stranger to them and spoke harshly to them, saying to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan, to procure food." 8. Joseph recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. 9. And Joseph remembered the dreams he had dreamt about them, and he said to them, "You are spies! To see the land in its nakedness you have come." 10. And they said to him, "No, my lord, for your servants have come to procure food. 11. We are all the sons of one man. We are honest. Your servants would never be spies." 12. He said to them, "No! For the land in its nakedness you have come to see." 13. And they said, "We your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and, look, the youngest is now with our father, and one is no more." 14. Joseph said to them, "That's just what I told you: you are spies. 15. Let this be your test—I swear by Pharaoh that you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here! 16. Send one of you to bring your brother, and as for the rest of you, you will remain under arrest, and your words will be tested as to whether there is truth in you, and if not, by Pharaoh, you must be spies!" 17. And he confined them in the guardhouse for three days. 18. On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and you shall live, for I am a God-fearing man. 19. If you are honest, let one of you brothers be detained in your place of arrest, and the rest of you go forth and bring back provisions to your starving households. 20. And your youngest brother you shall bring to me, so that your words may be confirmed and you need not die." And they did accordingly. 21. And they said to one another, "Why, we are guilty for our brother, whose sore distress we saw when he pleaded with us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has overtaken us." 22. Then Reuben answered them in these words: "Didn't I say to you, 'Do not sin against the boy,' and you would not listen? And now comes the reckoning for his blood." 23. And they did not know that Joseph understood [literally, "was listening"], for there was an interpreter between them. 24. He turned away from them and wept and returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and placed him in fetters before their eyes.

We hardly needed to be told that Joseph was viceroy of Egypt and chief provisioner (verse 6) because both his investment in high office and his economic policy were related in detail in the last part of the preceding chapter. The thematic utility, however, of repeating this information in summary form just as the brothers arrive is evident. Joseph's two dreams are here literally fulfilled, the dream of the sun and moon and stars bowing down to him linked more directly to his role as vizier, the dream of sheaves of grain bowing down to him pointing more particularly to his role as provisioner. The brothers then enact that long ago dreamt-of prostration, a gesture of absolute obeisance concretized by the addition of the emphatic phrase, "their faces to the ground." They are unaware of what the narrator reminds us of, flaunting his omniscience in order to underline their ignorance, that their essential identity is as "Joseph's brothers" (verse 6), and that it is Joseph who is vizier and dispenser of provisions. Their ignorance here of Joseph's actual identity is an ironic complement to their earlier failure to recognize his true destiny. The opposition between Joseph's knowledge (which is also the narrator's) and the brothers' ignorance is focused through the insistence of a key word that figured earlier in the story: he recognizes them, they recognize him not; and in a pun characteristic of the bibical use of thematic key words, he makes himself a stranger or seems a stranger to them, *vayitnaker,* a verb with the same root, *nkr,* as "recognize," *haker.*

Verse 9, in which Joseph remembers his early dreams, is one of those rare moments in the Bible when a narrator chooses not only to give us temporary access to the inward experience of a character but also to report the character's consciousness of his past. That unusual note is entirely apt here,

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both because Joseph himself is struck by the way past dreams have turned into present fact and because he will force his brothers into a confrontation with their own past. The two previous episodes of the Joseph story (Genesis 40 and 41) had been devoted to knowledge of the future, Joseph's interpretations of the dreams of his two fellow prisoners, then of Pharaoh's two dreams. Chapter 42, by contrast, is devoted to knowledge of the past, which, unlike knowledge of the future, is not a guide to policy but a way of coming to terms with one's moral history, a way of working toward psychological integration. No causal connection is specified between the fact of Joseph's remembering his dreams and the accusation of espionage he immediately levels against his brothers, a characteristic biblical reticence that allows for overlapping possibilities of motive. The narrator presumably knows the connection or connections but prefers to leave us guessing. Does the recollection of the dreams, coupled with the sight of the prostrate brothers, trigger a whole train of memories in Joseph, from the brothers' scornful anger after his report of the dreams to his terror in the pit, not knowing whether the brothers had left him there to die? Does Joseph now feel anger and an impulse to punish his brothers, or is he chiefly triumphant, moved to play the inquisitor in order to act out still further the terms of his dreams, in which the brothers must repeatedly address him self-effacingly as "my lord" and identify themselves as "your servants"? Is he moved chiefly by mistrust, considering his brothers' past behavior?

Is the accusation of espionage merely the most convenient way he as viceroy can threaten these foreigners, or does he sense some underlying affinity between the deceptiveness of spying and the deceptiveness of fraternal treachery? One is even led to wonder whether the reiterated phrase, "the land in its nakedness" (literally, "the nakedness of the land") might not have a special psychological resonance for Joseph in regard to what he perceives to be his brothers' relation to him and his father. All the other biblical occurrences of the common idiom "to see the nakedness of" or "to uncover the nakedness of" are explicitly sexual, usually referring to incest—it is precisely the phrase used for the act Ham perpetrates on his father Noah—and perhaps Joseph feels a kind of incestuous violence in what the brothers have done to him and through him to his father. Reuben, it may be relevant to recall, the first-born of the ten, actually lay with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine and Rachel's maid and conjugal surrogate, not long after Rachel's death, when Joseph was still a boy.

Perhaps none of these inferences is absolutely inevitable, but all are distinctly possible, and the narrator's refusal to supply specific connections between Joseph's remembering and his speaking conveys a sense of how the present is overdetermined by the past; for in this characteristic biblical perspective no simple linear statement of causation can adequately represent the density and the multiplicity of any person's motives and emotions. Joseph is not unknowable either to God or to the narrator but he must remain in certain respects opaque because he is a human being and we, the readers of the story, see him with human eyes.

The entire dialogue between Joseph and his brothers is remarkable for the way that words, creating the fragile surface of speech, repeatedly plumb depths of which the brothers are almost totally unaware and which even Joseph grasps only in part. Ostensibly a political interrogation, it is really the first of three climactic dialogues between Joseph and his brothers about their shared past and the nature of their fraternal bond. The ten brothers are throughout the object of dramatic irony, not knowing what both Joseph and we know—for example, when they announce, "We are all the sons of one man" (verse 11). (The double edge of this statement was not lost on earlier commentators. Thus Rashi, the great medieval French Hebrew exegete, observes: "They had a sudden flash of divine inspiration and included him with themselves.") But this is dramatic irony which outdoes itself through a series of psychologically fraught double meanings that trace the chief convolutions of their troubled fraternity. We are twelve, the brothers tell Joseph (for despite the more logical translation, "we were," the Hebrew of verse 13 invites construal as a present-tense statement). Only the two sons of Rachel are distinguished from the twelve: the youngest one is with his father and another, also unnamed, is no more. The ambiguity of this euphemism for death —it might also mean simply "is not" or "is absent" —aptly reflects the ambiguity of the brothers' intentions toward Joseph and the uncertainty of their knowledge about what has become of him. First they had thought of actually killing him, and Reuben, who tried to save him and found the pit empty, apparently still imagines (verse 22) that Joseph was killed. In any case, having sent Joseph southward to a distant slave market, the brothers might properly think him gone forever, as good as dead, or perhaps after all these years of grinding servitude, dead in fact.

Joseph's sharp response (verses 14-16) to this report of the brothers is an apparent non sequitur but faithfully follows the logic of the sub-surface exchange on the nature of their fraternal connection. Why, after all, should the admission of the ten that they have two more brothers, one at home and one gone, be seized as proof—"That's just what I told you!"—that they are spies? One may guess that the brothers' veiled statement about Joseph's fate trips a trigger of anger in him, reminding him of their treachery and thus driving him to repeat the accusation of espionage. He then demands that Benjamin be brought to him, not only because he

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may be eager to see his full brother but also because, with the memory of the ten brothers' act of betrayal uppermost in his mind, he can hardly trust these sons of Leah and the concubines; he may well wonder what they might have done to the other of Rachel's two sons. The "test" Joseph proposes has only a specious logic in the interrogation of spies: he implies that if one part of their statement about their family condition can be shown to be false, then there is no truth in them and they must be spies. (This obviously could not work as a test of spies because the converse would not hold: they might be telling the truth about their brother at home and yet be in Egypt to gather intelligence for unspecified Canaanite powers.) But the test has a profound logical function in the oblique interrogation of the brothers: if in fact they have left Benjamin unharmed all these years, the truth of their words will be confirmed, that, despite past divisiveness, "we are twelve . . . brothers, the sons of one man."

The narrator, as we have noted, began the episode by emphatically and symmetrically stating Joseph's knowledge and the brothers' ignorance. Now, through all this dialogue, he studiously refrains from comment, allowing the dynamics of the relationship between Joseph and his brothers to be revealed solely through their words, and leaving us to wonder in particular about Joseph's precise motives. Whatever those may be, the alertness to analogy to which biblical narrative should have accustomed us ought to make us see that Joseph perpetrates on the brothers first a reversal, then a repetition, of what they did to him. They once cast him into a pit where he lay uncertain of his fate; now he throws all ten of them into the guardhouse where he lets them stew for three days, then, as they did before, he isolates one brother—"one" of you brothers like the "one" who is said to be no more—and deprives him of his freedom for a period that might prove indefinite. (When Jacob eventually learns of Simeon's absence, he is quick to make this equation: "Me have you bereaved./Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more.")

We as readers knowingly perceive this analogy between Joseph's past plight and the present one of the brothers. The brothers on their part express at least an intuitive understanding of that connection, for they see the workings of a principle of retaliation in which "distress" is inflicted for "distress." What this means is that in their dialogue with each other (verses 21-22), the submerged interrogation on brotherhood of their interview with Joseph breaks through to the surface: arrested as spies, they are impelled to confess to each other their guilt in having done away with their brother. It is a fine stroke of delayed exposition that only now are we informed that when Joseph was seized by his brothers, he pleaded with them and they turned a deaf ear. Genesis 37, which reports the actual event of the kidnapping, is entirely silent on Joseph's words and feelings at that terrible moment; now the brothers' guilt is compounded by this new revelation of an imploring Joseph surrounded by impassive brothers.

But do the brothers imagine they are guilty of murder or kidnapping? Conventional biblical scholarship misses the point by supposing that the entire narrative is a somewhat confused splicing of two disparate versions of the Joseph story: in one, Reuben is Joseph's advocate and concludes he is dead after the Midianites (having found the boy in the pit quite by chance) take him away; in the other, Judah saves Joseph's life by proposing to sell him into slavery, the slave traders here being identified as Ishmaelites. Though not all the details of the two versions have been harmonized as modern conventions of consistency would require, it seems to me clear that the writer needs both for a variety of reasons, the most urgent one at the present juncture being a desire to intimate some moral equivalence between kidnapping and murder. In both versions, the brothers as a group first intended to kill Joseph. When Reuben discovers the boy has vanished from the pit from which he planned secretly to rescue him, the well-meaning first-born is persuaded that Joseph is dead. This overlap of the supposedly fatal disappearance of Joseph with the deliberate selling of Joseph suggests that selling him into slavery is a virtual murder and thus undermines Judah's claim that by selling the boy the brothers will avoid the horror of blood-guilt. Now, as the brothers finally face their culpability two decades after the criminal fact, it is the voice of Reuben that is heard, accusing them of fratricide, and no one tries to deny the accusation because, for all they know, that may be, at least in effect, the crime they have committed by selling him as a slave.

At precisely this point (verses 23-24), the narrator, who has absented himself ever since the first half of verse 9, except to convey tersely the information that Joseph placed his brothers under arrest (verse 17), steps forward to report something about Joseph which changes the whole emotional configuration we have been observing. First, there is another piece of delayed exposition which was cunningly withheld for the perfect moment. Up till now, we have not been encouraged to puzzle about the language in which Joseph and his brothers communicated. Perhaps we might even have supposed that this Egyptian political wizard would naturally exhibit a fluency in Canaanite dialects, only taking care regularly to swear by Pharaoh as a token of his thoroughly Egyptian identity. In any case, the mention of an interpreter at the beginning of his first dialogue with the brothers would have blunted the sense of immedi-

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ate confrontation which, as we have seen, is so essential psychologically and thematically to the progress of that scene. Now, when we are told that all along they have been speaking with a translator as intermediary, we are brought up short. Suddenly we realize that there is an added, technical dimension to the opposition between Joseph's knowledge and the brothers' ignorance: throughout this meeting, unknown to them, he has "understood" them or "listened to" them, and at this point he has just heard them twice confess their own past failure to listen to or understand him. "He turned away from them and wept and returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and placed him in fetters before their eyes." Until this moment, we might have assumed a perfect continuity between Joseph's harsh speech and his feelings. As he hears his brothers' expression of remorse, the first strong impulse of reconciliation takes place in his own feelings, though he cannot yet trust them and so must go on with the test. Through the knowing eyes of the omniscient narrator, we see him weeping in private, then resuming his stern Egyptian mask as he returns to address the brothers and to take his hostage from them.

Joseph's weeping, moreover, at the end of this first encounter between the brothers, initiates a beautifully regulated crescendo pattern in the story. Twice more he will weep. The second time (43:30-31), when he first sets eyes on his brother Benjamin, is in its stylistic formulation an elaborate expansion of the first report of weeping: "Joseph hurried off, for he was overcome with feeling for his brother and wanted to weep, and he went into a room and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out and got control of himself." Unlike the account in Chapter 42, the motive for the weeping here is clearly stated, and the specification of minute actions—wanting to weep, going into another room, weeping, washing his face, composing himself—is far beyond the Bible's laconic norm, thus focusing the event and producing an effect of dramatic retardation in the narrative tempo.

Manifestly, we are now moving toward a climax, and it occurs in the third act of Joseph's weeping (45:1-2), as at last he makes himself known to his brothers. Here, we are told that "he could no longer control himself," and the previously hidden weeping is now done in the presence of his brothers, turning into a tremendous sobbing that even the Egyptians standing outside can hear. The rising pattern, then, of three repetitions, begun with the eavesdropping Joseph of 42:23, is not only a formal symmetry through which the writer gives shape and order to his tale, but also the tracing of an emotional process in the hero, from the moment when twenty-two years of anger begin to dissolve to the one when he can bring himself to say, "I am Joseph your brother."

After Joseph's weeping and the imprisonment of Simeon in Genesis 42, the story moves on to the restoration of the brothers' money and then their first discovery of it (verses 25-28), which stresses a sense of strange destiny—"what is this God has done to us?" the brothers wonder—and once more opposes the ignorance of the brothers to Joseph's knowledge. Immediately after this opening of the bags at the encampment, the brothers are placed back in Canaan in the presence of their father, and just as we would expect of the Bible's convention of verbatim repetition, they report what has befallen them in Egypt by an almost exact restatement of extensive elements from their earlier dialogue with Joseph.

Understandably, this recapitulation (verses 29-34) of the previous scene in Egypt abbreviates it, but apart from the deletions, which speed up the narrative tempo in a way appropriate to the report of what has already been told, small, subtle changes in the phrasing and word order of the original dialogue nicely reflect the fact that the brothers are now addressing their father. Joseph here is twice referred to as "the man who is lord of the land," in still another unwitting confirmation, this time shared by father and sons, of the dream that the sun and moon and eleven stars would bow down to him. In the brothers' version for Jacob's benefit, first they affirm to Joseph the fact of their honesty and that they would never be spies, then that they are the twelve sons of one man, whereas in actually speaking to Joseph, they first announced that they were all the sons of one man, as though somehow that were a necessary preamble to their declaration of honesty. "We were twelve brothers," they restate for Jacob their earlier speech to Joseph, "the sons of our father. One is no more and the youngest now is with our father in the land of Canaan" (verse 32). Naturally enough, in speaking to Jacob they refer to him as "our father" and not as "one man in the land of Canaan." They also reverse the order of the information they gave to Joseph, placing first the brother who is no more and second the brother who is at home.

Perhaps they mean to suggest to their father that they divulged this precious fact of Benjamin's existence only grudgingly, at the end of their speech to the Egyptian overlord. In any case, "one is no more" is the climactic statement for Joseph, while "the youngest is now with our father" is the crucial revelation for Jacob, and so in each case what touches most deeply the person addressed is reserved for the last. When Joseph told the brothers of his intention to take a hostage, he said that one of them would be "detained" (the Hebrew word could also mean, quite plainly, "be fettered") in prison; in repeating Joseph's words to Jacob, the brothers diplomatically soften this to "Leave one of your brothers with me."

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Finally, where Joseph had concluded the terms of the test by saying that Benjamin would have to be brought to him if the brothers were to escape death, the brothers in their report to Jacob are careful to edit out this threatening talk of death and to make the vizier's speech end on a positive note present only by implication in the actual words he used to them: "Then I shall know that you are not spies but that you are honest. Your brother I shall give back to you, and you will be free to move about in the land" (verse 34).

This attempt to give a faithful but also tactful account of what happened in Egypt is immediately followed by the second discovery of the money in the saddle packs, the one that emphasizes the brothers' fear and, by implication, their sense of guilt. Jacob responds to this moment and to the entire report that has preceded it by accusing his sons of having bereaved him and by exhibiting his own suffering in formal rhetorical emphasis. At this point, his first-born steps forth:

> 37. Reuben said to his father, "My two sons you may put to death if I do not bring him back to you. Place him in my trust and I will return him to you." 38. And he said, "My son shall not go down with you. For his brother is dead and he alone remains, and should disaster befall him on the way, you would bring down my white head in grief to the underworld."

This dialogue—the narrator once more effaces himself and refrains from all "editorial" comment—provides a wonderful definition of the clash of different obtusities that so often constitutes family life and that has already had catastrophic consequences in this founding family of Israel. Reuben, the man of impulse who once violated his father's concubine and who also made a blundering attempt to save Joseph from the other brothers, offers to kill his own two sons if anything should happen to Benjamin. His father has just bemoaned being twice bereaved, and now Reuben compounds matters by volunteering to do away with two of Jacob's grandsons if Benjamin should be lost. (There seems to be a deliberate matching of two lives for two here, for in Genesis 46:9 we learn that Reuben actually had four sons.) Again one understands why Reuben the first-born will be passed over, and why the line of kings will spring from Judah, Joseph's second advocate, who in the next chapter will make a more reasonable statement of readiness to stand bond for Benjamin.

Jacob does not even honor Reuben's rash if well-meaning offer with a reply, but instead pronounces his determination not to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt. Before, he had said euphemistically and a little ambiguously that Joseph was no more; now he flatly states that Joseph is dead. Astonishingly, he remains as oblivious to the feelings of his ten sons as he was during Joseph's childhood. "He alone remains," he tells them to their faces, omitting the necessary phrase "from his mother," as though only the sons of Rachel, and not they, were his sons. Twenty-two years before, he had announced that he would go down to the underworld mourning his son. Now he concludes this episode by once more envisaging the descent of his white head to the underworld in inconsolable sorrow. Jacob is ever the rhetorician of grief, fond of verbal symmetries in his plaints, and so his speech begins with the words *lo yered,* "he shall not go down," and concludes with the "bringing down" (*vehoradtem*) of his old man's head to the underworld, thus forming a neat envelope structure. There may be an ironic play between Sheol, the underworld, and Egypt, that alien land to the south famous for its monumental cult of the dead. Benjamin, of course, will duly go down to Egypt, and as things turn out, Jacob will be brought down by his sons not to the underworld but to Egypt, where Joseph is alive and resplendent in his viceregal power.

Having closely followed through Genesis 42 the minute development of this thematic opposition between knowledge and ignorance—an ignorance on the part of Jacob and his sons not only of Joseph's actual fate but also of the underlying moral configuration of their family—we may now hurry on to the denouement, with just a few brief comments on the passages that lead up to it (43:1-44:17). Before long Jacob is forced to abandon his resolution about Benjamin by the brute force of circumstances: the persistence and worsening of the famine. At first he asks his sons in a rather gingerly phrase to "go back and get us a bit of food" (43:2), as though it were a matter of a trip to a nearby market. Judah, now emphatically assuming the role of spokesman, makes it inexorably clear that the provisions can be obtained only if Benjamin comes along. "For the man said to us," he quotes Joseph, " 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you' " (43:5). In point of fact, these words do not appear in the dialogue between Joseph and his brothers, but Judah is trying to drive home the idea to his reluctant father that the man who holds the keys to the life-sustaining grain will remain totally inaccessible without Benjamin.

Judah attributes one other utterance to Joseph that did not figure in the actual dialogue in Egypt: the question, "Is your father still alive?" The way the Bible uses verbatim repetition with additions makes it at least possible to imagine that Joseph really asked such a question but that it simply was not included in the reported dialogue, so it is not absolutely necessary to construe it as an invention of Judah's. In any case, the main reason for introducing the question

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here is proleptic, pointing forward to Joseph's anxious inquiry (43:27) of the brothers as to whether their father is still alive, and to his more urgent question, "Is my father still alive?" once he reveals himself—that is, now that you know I am Joseph, you can tell me the real truth about our father. Jacob bemoans his sons' imprudence in having even mentioned Benjamin's existence to the Egyptian, but Judah, with perfect thematic appropriateness, points out that they were caught in a web of consequences of which before the fact they were quite ignorant: "Know? How could we know that he would say, 'Bring down your brother'?" (43:7). And so Jacob agrees, grimly, reluctantly, to let Benjamin go, his last words to his sons striking a note of paternal grievance in perfect keeping with his previous speeches: "And as for me, if I am to be bereaved, then let me be bereaved" (43:14).

Before this, however, he has instructed the brothers to take with them to Egypt double the money that was placed in their bags as well as balm, honey, gum, ladanum, pistachio nuts, and almonds. By giving these orders, he unwittingly carries forward the pattern of restitution that marks the entire conclusion of the story. Money —specifically, pieces of silver—passed from the hands of the Ishmaelite traders to the brothers in exchange for Joseph, who was carried down to Egypt. Then Joseph sent money hidden in the bags back northward to Canaan. Now Jacob orders double the money to be sent back to Egypt. (The money/silver motif, as we shall soon see, will be given one more climactic twist.) The ironic connection with the Ishmaelite traders is ingeniously reinforced by the other half of Jacob's instructions: that caravan long ago was seen (37:25) "carrying gum, balm, and ladanum to be taken to Egypt," and now the brothers constitute another such caravan, bearing exactly the same goods, together with a few extra items, not bringing Joseph as a slave but headed, unawares, to the discovery of his identity as master.

With the rapidity with which biblical narrative elides unessential transitions, the brothers are then immediately placed in Joseph's presence ("They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph" [42:15]). As soon as they arrive, they are brought in haste by Joseph's officials to the viceregal palace, which makes them fear they are to be accused of having stolen the money they found in their bags. On the threshold of the palace, they proclaim their innocence in this regard to Joseph's majordomo. He assures them that nothing is amiss and that their God and the God of their father must have restored the money to them. (In this way an association is once more confirmed between Joseph's machinations and the workings of Providence.) Joseph at last sees Benjamin, "his brother, his mother's son" (43:29), and, as we have already observed, he is overwhelmed with emotion, going out to another room to weep. At the feast to which he invites the brothers, he seats them in the exact order of their birth, from eldest to youngest, which dumbfounds the brothers: the contrast between his knowledge and their ignorance is thus acted out in a kind of ritual.

The brothers then are sent off on the road to Canaan, Joseph once again instructing his majordomo to hide the money they have paid in their bags, but this time adding that his silver divining goblet is to be slipped into Benjamin's bag. The majordomo, in accordance with Joseph's orders, chases after the brothers and, quickly overtaking them, angrily accuses them of having stolen the precious goblet. They, of course, are aghast at this new charge, and feel sure enough of their innocence to tell him that if any one of them is found with the goblet, that person should be put to death. This grim detail invokes a parallel to a much earlier moment in their father's story, when, pursued by a wrathful Laban in part because someone had stolen Laban's household gods, Jacob confidently invited his father-in-law to search his tent and pronounced that if anyone were found to have taken the household gods, that person should not live (31:32). On that occasion, the stolen cult objects were not discovered, but the thief, Jacob's beloved wife Rachel, seems to have suffered the consequence of his sentence when she died giving birth to Benjamin. Now, the shadow of a similar doom is made to pass over that very son before the comic resolution of the plot. (The majordomo, it should be observed, immediately softens these fatal terms: "Only the one with whom it is found will be my slave, and the rest of you will go free" [44:10].)

The choice of a silver divining goblet for this false accusation of Benjamin is an ingenious fusion of the motif of silver—illicitly received, surreptitiously restored, and ultimately linked with the brothers' guilt toward Joseph—with the central theme of knowledge, for it is an instrument supposedly used by Joseph to foretell the future, as he has done more prominently with dreams. "What is this deed you have done?" he asks the brothers when they are brought back under arrest to the palace (44:15), and the general terms in which he couches his accusation touch all the way back to their criminal act against him two decades past. "Didn't you know"—and there was all too much they did not know—"that a man like me would certainly practice divination [or, would certainly manage to divine it]?"

WE ARE now at the final climactic turning of this extraordinary story. Judah comes forward to speak for all the brothers (44:16): "What can we say to my lord, what can we speak, by what can we prove our innocence? God has found out the crime of your servants. Here

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we are, then, slaves to my lord, the rest of us no less than the one with whom the goblet was found." This is the final confirmation by the brothers themselves of Joseph's dreamt-of supremacy, their necessary subservience. It is also an open admission of guilt which at least psychologically must refer to the real crime, the selling of Joseph for silver, and not to the imputed crime of stealing the silver goblet. Judah may understandably feel that he and his brothers cannot prove their innocence in regard to the stolen goblet, but he could not seriously believe it is an act they have knowingly committed, and the crime that God Himself has at last found out is certainly the making away with Joseph. Judah's proposal that all eleven brothers become slaves is rejected by Joseph as unjust: the thief alone should be detained. Judah, confronted with the prospect of inadvertently losing Benjamin after they have caused Joseph to be lost, steps closer to Joseph and pronounces his great impassioned plea:

> 18. I beg of you, my lord, let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and be not angry with your servant, for you are Pharaoh's equal. 19. My lord asked his servants, "Do you have a father or brother?" 20. And we said to my lord, "We have an old father with a child of his old age, the youngest. His brother is dead and he alone remains from his mother, and his father loves him." 21. And you said to your servants, "Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him." 22. And we said to my lord, "The lad cannot leave his father. If he were to leave him, his father would die." 23. And you said to your servants, "If your youngest brother does not come down with you, you shall not see my face again." 24. And so when we returned to your servant my father, we told him my lord's words, 25. and my father said, "Go back and get us a bit of food." 26. Then we said, "We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother is with us can we go down, for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us." 27. Then your servant my father said to us, "You know that my wife bore me two sons. 28. One is gone from me, and I said, 'Surely he has been devoured,' nor have I seen him since. 29. If you take this one, too, from me and disaster befalls him, you will bring my white head down to the underworld in evil." 30. Now, if I come to your servant my father and the lad is not with us, for his very life is bound up with the lad's, 31. and when he sees that the lad is not, he will die, and your servants will bring down the white head of your servant our father in evil to the underworld. 32. For your servant has pledged himself for the boy to my father, saying, "If I do not bring him back, I shall stand guilty to my father forever." 33. And so, let your servant stay here instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad return with his brothers. 34. For how could I return to my father if the lad is not with me? Let me not witness the evil fate that would overtake my father.

In the light of all that we have seen about this story, it should be clear that Judah's remarkable speech is a point-for-point undoing, morally and psychologically, of the brothers' earlier violations of fraternal and filial bonds. A basic biblical perception about both human relations and relations between God and man is that love is unpredictable, arbitrary, at times perhaps seemingly unjust, and Judah now comes to an acceptance of that fact with all its consequences. His father, he states clearly to Joseph, has singled out Benjamin for a special love, as he singled out Rachel's other son before. It is a painful reality of favoritism with which Judah, in contrast to the earlier jealousy over Joseph, is here reconciled, out of filial duty and, more, out of filial love. His entire speech is motivated by the deepest empathy for his father, by a real understanding of what it means for the old man's very life to be bound up with that of the lad. He can even bring himself to quote sympathetically (verse 27) Jacob's typically extravagant statement that his wife bore him two sons—as though Leah were not also his wife and the other ten were not also his sons. Twenty-two years earlier, Judah engineered the selling of Joseph into slavery; now he is prepared to offer himself as a slave so that the other son of Rachel can be set free. Twenty-two years earlier, he stood with his brothers and silently watched when the bloodied tunic they had brought to Jacob sent their father into a fit of anguish; now he is willing to do anything in order not to have to see his father suffer that way again.

Judah, then, as spokesman for the brothers, has admirably completed the painful process of learning to which circumstances and Joseph have made him submit; the only essential thing he still does not know is Joseph's identity. These revelations of a profound change in feeling shake Joseph. He can no longer go on with the cruel masquerade through which he has been testing his brothers, and so at last he bursts into tears openly in their presence, then says to them, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?"(45:3). Understandably, they are struck dumb with fear and astonishment, and so he has to ask them to step closer to him (45:4) as he repeats his revelation. "I am Joseph your brother," he announces, now adding the relational term, "whom you sold into Egypt." It is the last hovering moment, perhaps unintended by Joseph, of ominous ambiguity in his address to them, for those words about their having sold him, coming from the all-powerful ruler of Egypt, might well strike terror in the hearts of the brothers. Joseph seems to perceive this, for he continues (verse 5): "Now, be not distressed or angry with yourselves for having sold me down here. For it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you."

He then reveals to his brothers the full extent of his knowledge, telling them of the five years

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of famine still to come, and repeatedly stressing that it is God who has singled him out for greatness as the instrument of His providential design to preserve the seed of Israel. Joseph sends his brothers back to Canaan laden with the bounty of Egypt, instructing them to return with Jacob and all their households; and finally, after Jacob is vouchsafed a night vision from God that he should not fear the descent into Egypt, father and son are at last reunited.

All this, of course, makes a very compelling story, one of the best stories, as many readers have attested, that have ever been told. But it also unforgettably illustrates how the pleasurable play of fiction in the Bible brings us into an inner zone of complex knowledge about human nature, divine intentions, and the strong but sometimes confusing threads that bind the two. The consummate artistry of the story involves an elaborate and inventive use of most of the major techniques of biblical narrative: the deployment of thematic key words; the reiteration of motifs; the subtle definition of character, relations, and motives mainly through dialogue; the exploitation, especially in dialogue, of verbatim repetition with minute but significant changes introduced; the narrator's discriminating shifts from strategic and suggestive withholding of comment to the occasional flaunting of an omniscient overview; the use of a montage of sources to catch the multifaceted nature of the fictional subject.

All these formal means have an ultimately representational purpose. What is it like, the biblical writers seek to know through their art, to be a human being with a divided consciousness, intermittently loving your brother but hating him even more, resentful or perhaps contemptuous of your father but also capable of the deepest filial regard, stumbling between disastrous ignorance and imperfect knowledge, fiercely asserting your own independence but caught in a tissue of events divinely contrived, outwardly a definite character and inwardly an unstable vortex of greed, ambition, jealousy, lust, piety, courage, compassion, and much more?

Fiction fundamentally serves the biblical writers as an instrument of fine insight into these abiding perplexities of man's condition. That may help explain why these ancient Hebrew stories still seem so intensely alive today, and why it is worth the trouble to learn to read them attentively. It was no easy thing to make sense of human reality in the radically new light of the monotheistic revelation. The fictional imagination, marshaling a broad array of complicating and integrating narrative means, provided a precious medium for making this sort of difficult sense. By using fiction in this fashion, the biblical writers bequeathed to our cultural tradition an enduring resource, and we shall be able to possess their vision more fully by better understanding the distinctive conditions of art through which it works.

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Mehta's Philharmonic

Samuel Lipman

When Leonard Bernstein stepped down as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in 1969, to everyone's surprise—and to the dismay of many—the Philharmonic chose as his successor Pierre Boulez, a French avant-garde composer only recently turned full-time conductor, famous both for the forbiddingly cerebral quality of his music and for a certain aesthetic, social, and political radicalism which he frequently expressed in harsh and biting polemics.

Boulez was at this time, however, in the process of becoming widely known and respected as a conductor; he was even—compliment of compliments—greatly admired by George Szell, a man who specialized in contempt for his colleagues. From a start in the 1950's conducting at first avant-garde music and then more generally the music of the 20th century, Boulez had during the 1960's fulfilled extended engagements with the BBC Orchestra in London and later with the Cleveland Orchestra in this country. Here his success in modern music made him someone to watch (although his conducting of Wagner at Bayreuth during this decade did not make anything like so positive an impression). Boulez's first appearances with the Philharmonic took place during March and April of 1969; the public announcement of his appointment as Music Director came less than three months later.

Why did the Philharmonic make what was, on its face, so astonishing a choice upon so limited an acquaintance? From what little has been written and from much more which has been talked about, it is possible to conclude that Boulez was hired because he was felt to represent the wave of the future. In those days it was widely believed that youth was taking over the world, and the culture which would "turn them on" was the culture of the avant garde. Established arts institutions, then, could only survive by preempting both the new audience and the new aesthetic. To accomplish this task, Boulez—a kind of domesticated Stockhausen—must have seemed an inspired choice.

During Boulez's tenure, the Philharmonic, which had always played a large amount of new music, played even more. In addition to tilting the balance of programming at subscription concerts away from the famous classics toward unknown works both old and new, Boulez instituted avant-garde concerts at which he attempted to help unpopular new music along by introducing it himself in his personally charming manner. Each program he conducted was stimulating in conception, precise in direction, at all times original, and even memorable for those of intellectual bent.

But the hoped-for young came to his concerts only in small numbers, and even then on a very selective basis. For Boulez as for everyone else, the Philharmonic audience turned out to be composed of the same middle-class stock which has supported music for the past 150 years.

These worthy burghers, however, were not entranced either by Boulez's choice of repertory or by his essentially uninvolved and strangely rootless conceptions of music written before this century. Subscriptions to the Philharmonic dropped; among the audience which came, discontent was expressed in lukewarm applause and even booing. Orchestra members, unhappy with the personal attention he lavished upon a few favorites and with his strict and frequently curt criticisms of their playing, furthered the opposition to Boulez by calling him "the French correction." Toward the end, standards of performance slipped, as the orchestra found itself playing music it found either uninteresting or actually loathsome. And the press, led by the New York *Times*, retracted its early favorable judgment and strongly suggested that despite Boulez's admirable performances of new works, his inability to conduct romantic music in a traditionally satisfying way made him unsuitable to be head of the Philharmonic.

For despite Boulez's undoubted musical and intellectual strengths, what brought him down in New York was, in reality, a double failure. In the widest sense, the youth movement of the 1960's, far from heralding a cultural and social utopia, turned out to be a descent into apathy, anarchy, and even, from the cultural point of view, barbarism. Parallel with the fall of the youth ideology was the perceived collapse of the musical avant-garde publicly represented and championed by Boulez, marked as it was by a progress from dissonances to the use of non-musical sounds, ending finally in works of absolute silence. To be sure, as a composer Boulez himself had drawn back from the abyss, continuing to write music marked by organization and coherence. But the audience rejected his music as decisively as it did that of his more abandoned colleagues.

Recognizing what was happening, Boulez wisely did not postpone the inevitable. In 1974 he decided that he would leave at the end of the 1976-77 season; since his departure from New York he has not again

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conducted in the United States.

Finding a conductor to replace Boulez was a problem at once simple to formulate and difficult to solve. The affections of the public, so alienated during the Boulez years, must at all costs be recaptured. The paying customers in the hall, record buyers everywhere, and the hoped-for millions of viewers on television must be given what they wanted.

In a sense it was vastly more natural for the management of the Philharmonic to accomplish this task than it had been, in hiring Boulez, to predict the future. No one at Lincoln Center, after all, had possessed any special knowledge of the tastes of the young; no one, it must be assumed, had had much liking for the avant-garde music championed by Boulez. But in the post-Boulez era, management and audience could once again be united; everyone could join in the love of a repertory of romantic blockbusters leavened by the great classics, all performed with commitment and involvement. All that was needed was a conductor who could play the pieces people liked, the way they liked them played.

It was Zubin Mehta's fortune to fit this recipe to perfection; and so was consummated what has been called "the musical marriage of the decade."

BORN in Bombay in 1936, Mehta is the son of an American-trained violinist who himself wanted to conduct. The father led a semi-professional orchestra in Bombay, and through hearing it rehearse, the son early became acclimated to Western classical music. So complete was his orientation to this repertory that on his own testimony he remains to this day little more than a mere listener to his own, Indian, music.

In 1954 Mehta jumped at a chance to go to Vienna to study conducting, learning the double bass as a sideline. He quickly impressed his teachers, both by his quickness and by his will. While in Vienna he formed many friendships, including one with the *Wunderkind* pianist—and later conductor—Daniel Barenboim. By 1958 Mehta had emerged as the winner of an international contest for conductors in Liverpool. In 1960 he was named Music Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and soon made his debut with the Vienna Philharmonic. Almost immediately thereafter, in 1961, he became Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, then about to move into its highly touted new hall. Mehta was lionized in Los Angeles, where the full resources of Hollywood-style publicity were mustered in his behalf.

Abroad, too, his career prospered. He was made the conductor of the Israel Philharmonic, a position he still holds. He made many records, not only with the Israel and Los Angeles orchestras, but also with the Vienna Philharmonic and several groups in London; these records were consistently strong sellers. In the fullness of his success he dropped some disparaging remarks in 1967 about the New York Philharmonic, but following an apology he was eventually welcomed to the orchestra as a guest conductor. His appointment as Music Director, to begin in 1978, was greeted with enthusiasm and relief. After the six-year "plague" of Boulez, the audience could come home again.

A QUICK look at the repertory Mehta has decided to conduct during his first three seasons begins to suggest the magnitude of the change he has brought to the orchestra since Boulez. On subscription programs Mehta has scheduled about as much 20th-century music as Boulez did, but his choices have been on balance less provocative in the case of the avant-garde and less didactic in the case of works by accepted historical figures. On the other hand, Mehta has greatly increased the percentage of the repertory chosen from romantic composers—a category which includes music from Schubert and Mendelssohn to Brahms, Tchaikowsky, and Mahler. One change in the repertory in particular stands out: while Boulez played a great deal of French music and little late romantic music save Mahler, Mehta almost completely ignores French music (except for the showy aspect of Ravel) and instead specializes in Strauss, and does a good deal of Mahler as well.

As the repertory has been changed under Mehta, so has the sound of the orchestra. Boulez had favored clarity, astringency, and even delicacy, as if the ensemble were some kind of electronic instrument which could be programmed to make every detail simultaneously audible. Mehta has, by contrast, shaped a warm, lush, opulent, and even thick sound which in its richness suggests the tone of the Vienna Philharmonic rather than either the dryness of Boulez or the virtuoso brilliance historically associated with many top-rank American orchestras.

Sometimes the mood on the stage seems to have changed as well. As against the seriousness of the Boulez days, a performance last season of the Rimsky-Korsakov *Capriccio espagnol,* for example, was marked by a palpable air of relaxation and even a bit of clowning from some first-chair players during their solos.

The public reaction to all this has been enthusiastic. Subscriptions are on the rise, and individual tickets for many concerts are often hard to come by. Press comment has been on the whole favorable, though much praise has been qualified by caution and a general air of surprise. Publicity, generated by the Philharmonic's energetic hired hands and gladly featured by the media, has been extensive and usually tasteful. At concerts, instead of the pained looks so evident in the days of Boulez, smiles are now the rule.

So COMFORTABLE is the public mood, so charming the atmosphere in which Philharmonic music is now being made, and so natural and unassuming has Mehta been in the numerous interviews he so generously gives on radio and television, that it seems almost churlish to ask just how well he conducts, and just how good a musician he really is.

Without doubt, Mehta is a dependable professional conductor, well-organized and efficient in his use of rehearsal time. He also possesses a strong memory, feeling free to conduct long and complex works without a score. It is, however, said by some not so docile

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back-chair members of the orchestra that such manifestations of derring-do rarely pass without troubling, even if only occasional, lapses.

His Beethoven is undistinguished, managing to seem at once cautious and mannered. A case in point was his performance of the famous Fifth Symphony in November 1978, just after he had taken over the orchestra. It is a work to which he must have given much thought; he has many times mentioned the structural necessity not to make a break after each of the statements of the four-note motto which begins the first movement. Because of this concern for the niceties of phrase length, one would have expected a taut, integrated, cohesive performance from Mehta. Instead it all seemed flabby in conception and erratic in pacing, gotten off to a bad start from the very first note, which Mehta stressed as the first of a triplet rather than treating it as it is written, as an unaccented upbeat. The result, predictably, was shaky ensemble throughout the first movement and a sense of unease everywhere in the piece.

Much the same can be said about Mehta's performances of such different composers as Mozart and Brahms. His Mozart G-minor Symphony was slick and pretentious, as were his accompaniments of Mozart works for soloists like Shirley Verrett and Leontyne Price. As for his Brahms, it seemed as upholstered as his Mozart had seemed heavy. In his hands the Brahms Fourth Symphony began as badly as did his Beethoven Fifth, and by the time the long work was over, the cushions of Mehta's conception had obscured much of Brahms's detail without managing to hide the raggedness of the playing.

A noteworthy exception to this rule of Mehta's stilted relation to the classics has been, oddly enough, his performances of Schubert. An account of the Fifth Symphony, for instance, was gently lyrical, unforced, and simply expressive. Similarly, Mehta's Haydn seems straightforward and sturdy. Perhaps the reason for his good results with Haydn and Schubert lies in some awareness that these composers can be played without any attempt to make the kind of big statement Mehta finds so necessary in Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms.

While Mehta has played a great deal of romantic music—including the accompaniments to many concerti eschewed by Boulez—his heart plainly lies with that part of the repertory which is centered around Richard Strauss. The Strauss Mehta loves is evidently the composer of the sensual tone poems and *Salome,* rather than the composer of the neoclassic *Ariadne auf Naxos* or the resigned and gentle *Capriccio.* Given Mehta's penchant for the immediately affecting, audience-moving big statement, it is easy to see why his heart lies with the earlier rather than the later Strauss. The Strauss preferred by Mehta combines enormous scale with an infinite number of momentarily attractive details—a gigantic mosaic of emotions, expressed in the richest of harmonies and the most vibrant and varied of orchestral colors. These Mehta exploits to the hilt, producing from *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Ein Heldenleben* a result that for his adoring public constitutes something close to signature tunes.

Successful though he is in this music—and in the operas of Puccini as well—it is hardly a happy sign that he finds his home in what, for all its attractiveness, remains lesser music of vulgar and somewhat dubious taste. Moreover, there is something disturbing in how seriously he takes these works, how highly he values them, and how much he plays them. To treat such music in this way is to credit it with a stature even Strauss himself scarcely had in mind.

MEHTA's approach to music is, in general, thoroughly modern—a statement that will surprise only those who confuse contemporary performance styles with the avant-garde in composition. In fact, executants today make every effort not to sound dry, cold, and hostile; their stated goals are feeling, expressiveness, and, for want of a better word, "humanity." To modern performers—regardless of the cultural and intellectual inhibitions they feel because of the doctrines of authenticity and exactitude—notes are shells to be filled with personal meaning through rhythm, tempo, dynamics, phrasing, and all the various permutations and contrasts thereof.

But in addition to these old standbys, one expressive device, because it can be indulged in without doing obvious violence to the composer's notation, is a special favorite. This device involves playing as warmly as possible at all times; the slang expression current among musicians is "playing with feeling." The greatest contemporary masters of such affective technique are string players, led by Mehta's close musical associates Isaac Stern, Pinchas Zukerman, and Itzhak Perlman. To hear them all together —described in the publicity as "The Fiddlers Three"—with Mehta conducting in a nationally televised Pension Fund Concert this past September was to hear modern playing at its height. So much emotion so constantly exhibited, not only in Brahms but also in Bach, Mozart, and Vivaldi, is for the majority of the audience the sound of gold; to other, perhaps more discriminating, tastes it all seems like molasses.

For no matter how great the gain in immediate audience satisfaction, raising the emotional temperature so high by means of this indiscriminate approach requires the performer to slight such classical virtues as contrast and repose. In this hyper-emotional musical world, every moment is equal to every other moment; emotion itself becomes a style rather than a bearer of meaning. And eventually where everything is hot, everything is cool. The end can only be boredom, and indeed such boredom is characteristic of today's world of serious music. Never have so many striven to be so vital, and never have so many been so uninteresting.

No matter how great his audience success and his present superstar status, it is precisely this kind of boredom that Mehta is courting. The conclusion cannot be avoided that for all his eloquent posturing on the podium, Mehta brings no distinctively personal musical qualities to his work. As a result, he has during his period in New York

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been utterly without effect on musical life either in styles of performance or in repertory. He has discovered no important new music, he has rediscovered no hitherto little-known music, and he has had no noticeable influence on the way anybody plays anything. Notwithstanding the press comparison of Mehta with Toscanini and Furtwängler (a more apt comparison would be with Stokowski), Mehta is all in all of little concern to his colleagues, and even to members of his own orchestra.

Soloists, to be sure, are understandably eager to appear with him; their careers benefit. Orchestra players value both his public kindness toward them and the hope he holds out of increased compensation for recordings and television broadcasts. But none of this has much to do with the influence of a historically great conductor on his times.

Worse still, it would even seem that the basic hope of New York's many serious music lovers—that the Philharmonic would finally begin to play as well as the talents of its members have long promised—remains unfulfilled. The besetting dryness of tone of the Boulez years has been corrected, only to be replaced by an opaque uniformity of texture and a sloppiness of attack. Despite the changes in first-chair players which Mehta has begun to make, no improvement in this state of affairs seems about to take place. The opening concert of the current season was marked both in the Bartók Concerto for Orchestra and the Brahms Second Symphony by imprecise ensemble and an overall air of routinized dullness. And though we are always told that everything is improving, the disturbing evidence of recordings going back a generation and more is that the Philharmonic used to play better.

ANY historical consideration of the New York Philharmonic provides ample evidence for the conclusion that Zubin Mehta's tenure as Music Director represents one pole of the orchestra's repeated alternation between the conception of the conductor as explorer and innovator, and of the conductor as audience success. In the present century the explorers were Mahler, Mitropoulos, and Boulez; their successors were the box-office hits Stransky, Bernstein, and now Mehta.

One can hardly blame the Philharmonic for choosing survival as its primary goal. Orchestra players are expensive employees in today's world of fifty-two-week seasons, high-powered labor negotiations, and the proffered manna of government funding. And the shortage of viable new music has made it harder—some would say impossible—for a new conductor to produce an artistic statement by musical means alone.

But perhaps the most debilitating condition under which the Philharmonic, along with other musical institutions in America, labors is the requirement that it be all things to all men. The demands the orchestra must satisfy are seemingly limitless: they range from the satisfaction of sophisticated audiences to the painless education of the unsophisticated; from the pleasing of private backers to the meeting of the demands from minorities for representation; from the preservation of old music to the showcasing of the new; from the need to bring over European artists for excitement to the requirement enforced by both government and press that American artists and composers be given preferential treatment.

Impossible as might be the simultaneous accomplishment and even the undertaking of all these tasks, they must—to make matters, if possible, still worse—be pursued in the political-cultural atmosphere of today's America. This is a world in which high art is either diverting entertainment for a mass audience or it is nothing: anything that demands more from an audience or is more serious in its goals is fatally open to the twin charges of elitism and social irrelevance. Such an idea of art as amusement is hardly unfamiliar to the Philharmonic. Once upon a time, after all, the orchestra filled four weeks of engagements at the Roxy Theater, and just this past summer, in addition to its usual outdoor, amplified concerts before hundreds of thousands in New York City parks, the orchestra played a concert—also amplified—for the patrons of the Resorts International casino-hotel in Atlantic City.

At the moment the Philharmonic is riding a crest of local popularity, and its status as an established institution gives it a prime claim on the cultural dollar. But the mass public is a fickle master and, no less than private philanthropy, it is both unpredictable and limited. At some point the hard questions will be asked: does the Philharmonic have an artistic mission, and is it fulfilling that mission in a distinguished manner? These are questions to be decided in musical terms alone. At the moment the answer to both is no. Indeed, under Mehta the Philharmonic is not even making the attempt.

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Staying the Course

FACING REALITY: FROM WORLD FEDERALISM TO THE CIA. By CORD MEYER. *Harper & Row. 448 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by CHARLES HORNER

CORD MEYER, a veteran of a quarter-century with the Central Intelligence Agency, has published two books. The first, *Peace or Anarchy,* appeared in 1947. It argued the case for the program of the United World Federalists, of which Meyer was then the young and enthusiastic president. The second, *Facing Reality,* now appears some thirty years later, and is an account of what happened to Meyer, and to his world, in the interim.

In 1977, Meyer retired from the CIA where, for many years, he had worked in the upper echelon of the agency's clandestine division. His career, therefore, spanned a kind of rise and fall of the CIA; clearly he hopes that his memoir will contribute to a restoration of the agency's public favor, perhaps even among those people who were once instrumental in its founding and growth. For Meyer comes from that amorphous but nonetheless real "Eastern elite" which dominated American foreign policy during World War II and the period thereafter. A product of Yale and Harvard, a young writer of ability, he was at home among people who knew, if not everyone, then at least a representative sampling. By 1948, Meyer seems to have met, one way or another, Dwight Eisenhower, Albert Einstein, George Marshall, Harry Truman, and many others; Reinhold Niebuhr officiated at his wedding. When, in 1951, he contemplated joining the CIA, he had a personal interview with Allen Dulles and then a talk with Walter Lippmann—who was "cautiously positive." In those days, the agency belonged to the gentlemen, though when it came under assault in the mid-1960's, not all of them rallied to its defense.

There is in this book a kind of parallel between institutional history and autobiography which the author probably did not intend. In retrospect, we now know that the CIA, for all its privileged origins, was not to lead a charmed life. Cord Meyer did not lead a charmed life either. He lost an eye in World War II, and his twin brother was killed in the conflict. Years later, his nine-year-old son was struck and killed by an automobile on a country road. His first marriage ended in divorce and, seven years later, his former wife was found murdered in Washington, D.C. When Meyer left the CIA in 1977, his career seems to have petered out amid the demoralization and intrigue which were then rife in the agency.

Meyer describes how his interest in world federalism grew out of his wartime experience. His hope was that the postwar world, prodded by the appearance of nuclear weaponry, would finally achieve a new level of international organization and cooperation. He was somewhat disappointed by his service on the staff of the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco conference which gave birth to the United Nations. Thinking, at first, that the prospects for a better world order were jeopardized by the insularity and apathy of democratic publics, Meyer came to conclude that the main obstacles were, in fact, the nature and ambitions of the Soviet state. Like many liberals of that time, he did battle with Communists who were intent upon subverting liberal causes and organizations.

This first-hand exposure to Communist tactics provided an understanding of similar Communist efforts in other countries. The movement to the CIA thus represented only a superficial reversal in Meyer's attitudes, for the agency was at that time certainly a liberal institution; it was as much interested in supporting the democratic Left around the world as it was in the conduct of old-fashioned espionage. (This fundamental political orientation of the agency made it suspect on the far Right; in the 1950's, Meyer himself was accused of Communist associations, but was cleared.)

By virtue of his organizational experiences and literary abilities, Meyer's métier became the political and ideological side of the world struggle. Unhappily, it receives insufficient attention in this book. He recounts at some length the first of the agency's troubles, its involvement with the U.S. National Student Association, which surfaced in 1967; he also gives an account of the activities of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, with which he became involved through the CIA in 1954. But he says nothing at all about the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its achievements. As the book progresses through various crises in the life of the CIA, especially those of the 1970's, the writing seems to become less substantial. The tale foreshadowed in the opening parts of the book—the tale of how the CIA fell—is never quite told, and in the last few chapters, Meyer drops the story altogether and, in what is actually a separate book, devotes himself to an entirely impersonal analysis of the Soviet threat and how to counter it.

DESPITE its air of sedulous nonrevelation, however, the book does provide an impression of Cord Meyer himself that implicitly offers a clue both to the CIA's travails and to his understated recounting of them. Meyer strikes one as a praiseworthy man, brave and dedicated in an unassuming, wholly matter-of-fact way. Certainly, his writing reveals no vanity or pettiness, cynicism or world-weariness. He seems, indeed, to believe that there is nothing that very much distinguishes him, either from many of his colleagues or from people in general. Thus, if he is silent on the failings either of individuals or even of a "class," his is not the silence of a college boy who keeps secrets out of primitive loyalty to

CHARLES HORNER *is adjunct professor in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.*

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Secrets of the Blood

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the fraternity house. Rather, his service seems not to have taken a toll of him; his supposed migration of thirty years—"from world federalism to the CIA"—has really not been all that vast.

This may be more easily understood if it is contrasted with the opposite phenomenon—the mordant sophistication of those of his former colleagues who pride themselves on having kept pace with "changes" in the world over this same period of time. Such people are bound to find Meyer quite exasperating. Conversely, because they are the kind of people that Meyer himself cannot at all understand, he does not write about them. He does not fathom why they have chosen to make life so difficult for themselves.

Americans thought, and still think, that intelligence agencies are one of those unpalatable imports from the old world. The CIA, with its origins in America's best, was supposed to represent the proper Americanization of that unseemly European activity. The institution embodied an effort to create, almost in an instant, a homegrown tradition for coping with the need for skullduggery. No doubt, the founders responded to the romance of it, but they maintained a certain disdain, born of *noblesse oblige*, for what they had to do. However, they lacked the cynicism of their European counterparts, and when they came to be charged with transgressions, they assumed, being overly well-trained in the Christian tradition, that they had to search their own souls rather than those of their accusers. For the moment, perhaps forever, they have abandoned the field. They explain themselves, when what they should be explaining is how to repair the damage that has been done.

Meanwhile, for all the public fascination with the CIA and the hidden world of which it is a part, there is still very little practical sense of the stakes involved. Americans, so often accused of xenophobia, really do not take any of this seriously. It is quite impossible, for example, to have a serious public discussion about espionage; a sober assessment of the efforts of the totalitarian states to spy upon, undermine, and destabilize the free nations is simply not welcome in polite society. Even treason, of the Anthony Blunt sort in Great Britain, is analyzed as a sociological or cultural phenomenon, about which the educated man is encouraged to have an opinion. But he is not encouraged to think about the consequences of treason, or of the people who were murdered after they had been betrayed.

This whole devolution in the attitude of elites in the free world toward the maintenance of their own vital institutions can be bracketed between Cord Meyer's two books. The author and his first work were once very welcome in all of the right places. Today, the writer and his second volume may at best be thought of as quaint in the same circles. It is precisely this which establishes the difference between those who stayed the course and those who did not.

Israel & America

THE STATE OF THE JEWS. By MARIE SYRKIN. *New Republic Books. 368 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by JULIUS WEINBERG

UNLIKE others who have ventured lately to speak about the relationship between Israel and American Jewry, Marie Syrkin brings to the task a lifetime of impeccable credentials as a writer and a Zionist. Now in her early eighties, she is the daughter of Nahman Syrkin, one of the founders (at the turn of the century) of the Labor Zionist movement; a disciple of Hayim Greenberg, the charismatic Zionist spokesman on the American scene in the interwar and immediate postwar era; long-time editor of the *Jewish Frontier*, the official English-language magazine of Labor Zionism in the United States; a prolific biographer, essayist, and polemicist in her own right; and for many years a professor of literature at Brandeis University.

Given Marie Syrkin's strong literary and journalistic bent, and her equally strong Jewish and Zionist commitments, *The State of the Jews* turns out to be, not surprisingly, something of a *tour de force*, a highly readable collection of essays covering many facets of the Jewish experience from World War II to the present. Few topics of Jewish concern have escaped her attention; she ranges in this volume from the ethnography of a Jewish Indian community in Mexico, to the plight of teenagers in Displaced Persons camps after the war in Europe, to the explosive confrontation between (mainly Jewish) public-school teachers and the (mainly black) advocates of "community control" in New York City in the late 60's.

Despite the range, however, the fifty or so essays in *The State of the Jews* are dominated by two principal concerns: the survival and security of the state of Israel, and the welfare of the Jewish people in the United States and elsewhere in the Diaspora. Miss Syrkin pursues implacably those who would harm or diminish the stature of Jews anywhere in the world or threaten the security of the Jewish state. Some of the strongest pieces in *The State of the Jews* are her responses to Hannah Arendt, Arnold Toynbee, I.F. Stone, and Vanessa Redgrave. These essays—published over the years in the *Jewish Frontier*, *Midstream*, COMMENTARY, and other journals—are extremely well done; their scholarship is sound and their passion bracing.

Of equal worth are Miss Syrkin's essays on the Holocaust, a number of which were written during the time she spent working in the DP camps immediately after the end of World War II. These pieces are marked by journalistic fidelity to the events they depict, an anger toward the world that permitted such events to occur, and enormous compassion for the victims. Miss Syrkin's portraits of teenagers in the camps competing for scholarships to study in the United States, of youngsters immersed in the study of Talmud in the newly reestablished yeshivas, of teachers debating proposed curriculum changes in the camp school, are evocative and

JULIUS WEINBERG *is professor of history at Cleveland State University. The third edition of* The Social Fabric, *which Mr. Weinberg co-edited, will appear in January (Little, Brown).*

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moving. To be fully appreciated, perhaps, they should be read together with her thoughtful assessments of Holocaust literature. Although the Holocaust mini-industry that has been spawned in this country has moved well beyond the diaries of Anne Frank, Moshe Flinker, and Chaim Kaplan, Miss Syrkin's essays on the works of these and other writers still repay consideration. In contrast to current fashion, she tends to focus on the text and its historical implications, and to eschew the homiletic, pedagogic, psychological, and theological—not to mention the entrepreneurial—uses to which the Holocaust has been put.

When it comes, finally, to Israel, Miss Syrkin is thoroughly in her element. Her pieces under this rubric—especially concerning the nature of the Zionist enterprise and Israel's relationship to its Arab neighbors—provide an effective antidote to the lies currently gaining strength in the assembly halls of the United Nations, among Western leaders, and, unhappily, in some segments of the American Jewish community. Going back to the period just after World War I, Miss Syrkin delineates with great clarity the anti-Zionist attitudes of the English and their hostility to the idea of a Jewish state; the obduracy of the Arabs to any form of partition—a solution Ben-Gurion and most Palestinian Jews would have seized with alacrity; the Arab initiative in the 1947-48 war and the Arab responsibility for the flight of Palestinian Arabs from their homes and farms during the war; and the fraud—demographic and financial—perpetrated in the Arab refugee camps. On the other side, she relentlessly reiterates the truth about the improved living standards of the Arab population under Zionist and later Israeli rule, and she eloquently defends the record of Israel's long search for peace, up to and including the chapter written by the Likud government under Menachem Begin, which for a treaty with Egypt gave away the Sinai with its valuable oil fields and settlements.

In the light, indeed, of just these essays, with their detailed analyses of Arab hostility toward the Jewish state, of Western passivity and Soviet mendacity, one is hard-pressed to explain the willingness of this spokesman for the Zionist cause to sign her name, as she recently did—along with Arthur Miller, Nat Hentoff, Robert Heilbroner, Michael Walzer, and assorted other old leftists and new liberals—to the petition of the American Friends of "Peace Now" that appeared in the New York *Times* several months ago and that named the Begin government's policy of settlement on the West Bank as the critical obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

One possible but unlikely explanation for this surprising act would be that Miss Syrkin has changed her mind on the fundamental issue of Israel's position in the Middle East or on the equally fundamental issue of Arab intentions. A more plausible explanation would have to take into account the shifts on the Israeli political landscape, and especially the re-

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placement of the ruling Labor party by the Likud in 1977. There is little criticism in *The State of the Jews* of the policies of Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin when *they* headed the government of Israel after 1967, nor does Miss Syrkin rebuke the paramilitary settlements and kibbutzim established by Labor on the West Bank, on the Golan Heights, and in the Rafia area of the Sinai. It may be that the legitimacy of Israel's actions are linked in her mind with a particular movement and party.

But internal politics aside, the recent failure of Miss Syrkin and other bona-fide Zionists to rally to the support of the beleaguered Jewish state in the forum of American public opinion may tell us a great deal about the direction in which Zionism is headed. What ties the generation of Nahman Syrkin and Ber Borochov to the current spokesmen of the movement is not the socialist component of Zionist ideology but rather that factor stressed by Ben-Gurion: an all-consuming concern for the renewal of the Jewish people and the primacy of the Jewish state. But as Marie Syrkin notes in her closing essay, the pivotal element in the fulfillment of the Zionist dream *aliyah*, has been neglected by Jews throughout the world. In her words, "the ingathering confidently anticipated by the founders of Israel has not taken place. . . . That is the inner wound of Zionism."

As a result, what passes for Zionist activity in the Diaspora—particularly in the United States—has fallen, largely by default, into the hands of the community-relations organizations, and has become for the most part a matter of public relations, political lobbying, fund-raising, and, unfortunately, of late, petition-signing. The core of Labor Zionism—*aliyah* and the "conquest of the land"—has ironically passed from the secular socialists to the resurgent religious wing of the Zionist movement, much to the dismay of many old-timers who are embarrassed by the ideological certitude of the new immigrants with their commitment to "outmoded"—i.e., religious—concepts and goals.

In retrospect, it appears that many elements of the Zionist experience could not long survive the loss of their Eastern European roots. One suspects that for better or worse the future of the movement, like the future of Israel itself, will be determined to a growing extent by the new grass-roots constituencies among the Sephardim and the Orthodox. With this sort of Zionism, Marie Syrkin would not appear to have much sympathy, and so her book, which bears witness to some of the most productive passions of the Jews in the contemporary period, may be seen also as a concluding token of this particular passage in their political and ideological development.

At Home

AT ODDS: WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN AMERICA FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT. By CARL N. DEGLER. *Oxford. 527 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY EASTLAND

The thesis of this book, as indicated by its title and spelled out in the preface, is that the equality of women and the institution of the family have been at odds with each other ever since the Revolution. Carl N. Degler would have us believe that this conflict is the central fact about women and the family in America, but seventeen out of eighteen chapters of this book tell quite a different story—a story of how women and the family have long been in harmony. Only the last chapter, entitled "Woman's Dilemma" (and which could more accurately have been called "Contemporary Woman's Dilemma"), actually portrays women and the family in conflict. For the rest, Degler's book simply does not substantiate his conclusions.

Degler begins with the emergence of the "modern family" at the end of the 18th century. In this family, he writes, "women's activities were increasingly confined to the care of children, the nurturing of husband, and the physical maintenance of the home." As for the

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husband, his activities were outside the home in the world of work. Thus, early on in America, husbands and wives had "sharply differentiated roles" according to the "doctrine of separate spheres."

No sooner had these roles been assigned, however, than a revolution in consciousness took place. Women began to experience that broad post-Enlightenment phenomenon which Degler calls "the awakening of self" and which lasted throughout the 19th century. Degler seems to believe that such an "awakening" must necessarily threaten the family, but he fails to demonstrate this. To be sure, there were women in the 19th century like Victoria Woodhull, the advocate of free love, whose particular "awakening of self," if practiced by everyone, would indeed have broken up the family, as many believed and as she devoutly hoped it would. But, as we learn from Degler's own history, most American women who asserted themselves during the 19th century did so within the family and in behalf of it.

Degler maintains, for example, that the "single most important fact about women and the family in American history" is the halving of the fertility rate (from 7.04 to 3.56) that occurred between 1800 and 1900. But why did women endeavor to bring about this reduction in family size? Not to escape the family but, in large part, because mothers wanted to devote more time to each individual child. Degler also shows that when women sought to limit sexual promiscuity among men, as in the Social Purists' campaign to establish a single, "female" standard of sexual behavior—confining it to marriage—they were motivated by the desire not to subvert family life but to shore up and strengthen it.

This motive would seem to have applied to even the most militant among the Social Purists and other crusaders Degler discusses. He points out that these women left the safe confines of their homes and went out into the world not to desert their families but to help them. Thus, as the title of one chapter says, the world for many women became "Only a Large Home." Degler quotes Carry Nation:

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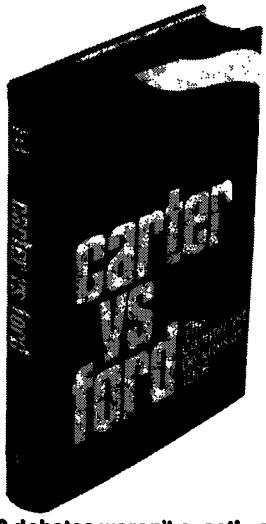

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Degler himself underlines the point:

> If women were to be effective guardians of the home and its morality, they might well find it necessary to act in the world in order to protect the home and to preserve its morality. The connection in the popular mind between women and morality provided strong justification for women's participation in organizations and activities outside the kitchen or the nursery.

Toward the end of the 19th century, these activities came to include educating the nation's young. Most teachers were women, and, as Degler notes, this "fitted easily into the social ideology that women were the rearers of children and the moral companions of men within the family."

So far through Degler's history, then, it is clear that women and the family are less at odds with one another than in harmony. But what about later, with the extension of the suffrage to women, and the great entrance of women into the workforce, beginning at the close of the 19th century? Here too the data all seem to work in the same direction. For example, suffrage for women was first proposed in 1848, at Seneca Falls, New York, but some seventy-two years passed before an amendment was added to the Constitution. The reason it took so long was that for most of these years the proposed amendment was taken to mean that women as a class had their own separate political interests. Only when this perception faded and a different reason was advanced for women's suffrage could the amendment finally be ratified. The new reason, writes Degler, was "that women had a special contribution to make to society, something that men could not provide." Even suffrage, then, became "a way of extending women's special sphere to society," not a way of "providing political expression for women's self-interest as individuals."

As for women in the workforce, Degler points out that by the early 1900's women had "moved into virtually all professions, if only tokenly, and into the great majority of occupations." Still, it is hardly apparent that this movement toward equality—granting it was that—was in conflict with the family any more than the women's-suffrage movement was. "Right down to 1940," writes Degler, "the great majority of women, insofar as they could, shaped their lives and their work around their families."

Even after 1940, as Degler shows, this was still true, though several important changes had taken place. No longer was it mainly single women who worked. Between 1940 and 1975, the number of married women entering the labor force rose more than two-and-a-half times as fast as the number of married women in the nation at large, and among them the number of mothers with children six years old or under tripled. Nonetheless, according to Degler, the position of women in the family did not change very much. "Women's relation to the family," he writes, "remained as primary and central as it had ever been. It was now combined with work, to be sure, but that outside job was secondary and supplementary to the family, which still remained the primary concern and sphere of most women." Degler emphasizes, moreover, that the work patterns of women were not imposed on them from without. These patterns, he writes, "should be seen as a choice by women and not simply the result of male oppression or denial of equality of opportunity."

WITH this, Degler moves on to his final chapter, where he sketches the history of the modern women's movement, points out the wider range of choices that women have today, and then proceeds to read the present into the past. He now seeks to persuade the reader that this modern tension between the "individual interests of women"

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and the institution of the family has been developing for two centuries, and that this tension is the central fact about women and family in American history. Yet the history Degler has so carefully chronicled contains little evidence for this thesis, and much evidence for the opposite.

A good deal of current feminist doctrine, of course, sees the family as the chief stumbling block in the way of women's equality, and has been hammering at this point for a decade or more. But this view is simply not an accurate rendition of the American past, as Degler's book shows. It is unfortunate that the book does not have the courage of its own contents.

Even if it did, however, *At Odds* would still be flawed by the author's tendency to view the past through the distorting lens of the present. Thus, although he is preoccupied with the issue of how children are reared in America, he never acknowledges the importance of what 19th-century parents called moral education, which was much different from what many people today mean by that term. Remarkably, the two books most influential in forming the American character during the 19th century—the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*—are never even mentioned in this history. Nor for that matter is there any discussion of the role of religion in American life, despite Tocqueville's assessment in 1835 that "there is no country in the world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America."

Similarly, when Degler writes about the "awakening of self" in the 19th century he transplants current obsessions with self-fulfillment into the past, disregarding the communitarian ethic of the time in which the individual's desires and aspirations were conceded a place, but within a larger perspective that included the desires and aspirations of others. It is, in fact, chiefly the supersession of this ethic by today's narcissistic brand of "individualism" that now threatens the family and much more besides, but this is something that is hardly limited to women. It is not

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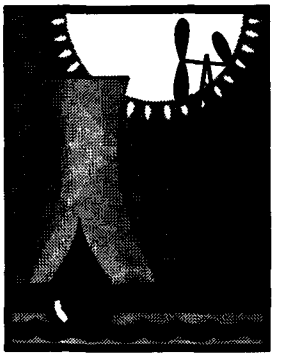

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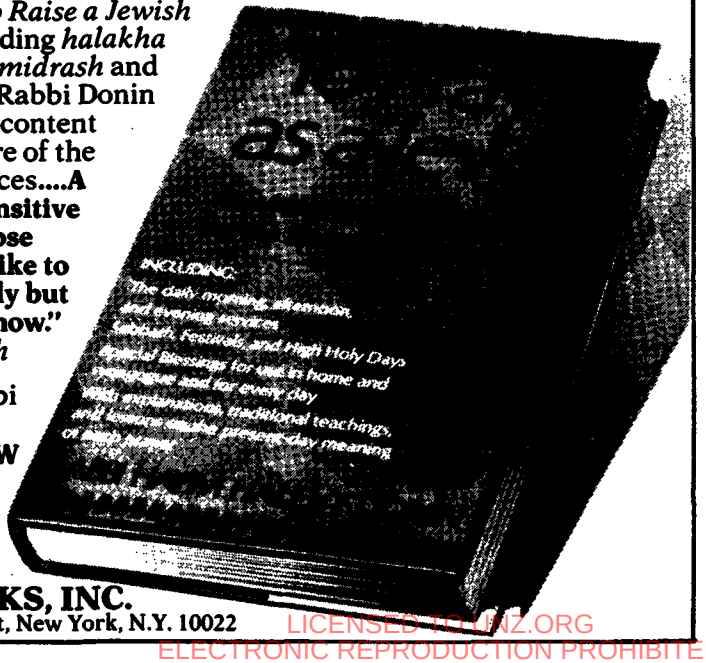

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Soviet Psychiatry

SOVIET PSYCHOPRISONS. By HARVEY FIRESIDE. *Norton. 201 pp. $12.95.*

INSTITUTE OF FOOLS. By VICTOR NEKIPELEV. Edited and translated by MARCO CARYNNYK and MARTA HORBAN. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 292 pp. $15.00.*

PUNITIVE MEDICINE. By ALEXANDER PODRABINEK. Translated by ALEXANDER LEHRMAN. *Karoma. 223 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN

LEONID PLYUSHCH, a mathematician from Kiev and an active figure in the Soviet human-rights movement, spent nearly four years in psychiatric hospitals. He described his treatment in his memoir, *History's Carnival*:

> The tranquilizers and the daily sights deadened me intellectually, morally, and emotionally. The treatment and the regulations . . . were meant to break the inmate straightaway and crush his will to fight. . . . Although I tried to spit the drugs out when I could, they were killing my desire to read or think, and politics was thoroughly nauseating. My memory was slipping away, and my speech became jerky and abrupt. Autism and misanthropy appeared, and for days on end I lay on my bed and tried to sleep. The only thoughts that remained concerned smoking and bribing the orderlies for an extra trip to the lavatory. I even dreaded the visits I had longed for so desperately, because I was worried that [my wife] Tanya might mention new arrests, and I did not want her to see my apathy and sleepiness or the dropsical swelling and con-

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JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN *is New England Coordinator of Amnesty International, U.S.A. and the author of* Soviet Dissidents *(Beacon Press).*

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vulsions that the drugs brought on. Visits from the children were particularly painful. I had to force a smile and try to make jokes.

I was increasingly afraid that my deterioration was irreversible and that I might help my torturers by going mad. Despair at the thought that there might be no end to this hell led many healthy patients to contemplate suicide. I, too, was losing my will to live. I maintained a grip on myself only by saying over and over: I must not become embittered, I must not forget, I must not give up!

Plyushch was one of the lucky ones. In January 1976, the authorities put him on a train with his mother, his wife, and his two children and sent him to Vienna. Doctors there found traces in his blood of the drugs he had been tortured with.

Plyushch was not a solitary victim. Political nonconformists in the USSR have been placed in mental hospitals since the time of Stalin. But in those years, as we know now from prisoners who survived, the hospitals were regarded as humane alternatives to the forced-labor camps and prisons that consumed millions. Doctors would declare a dissenter "non-responsible" in order to save him. There were no drugs available to abuse the prisoners, and the "politicals" were separated from the truly disturbed patients.

The situation deteriorated under Khrushchev. In an oft-quoted speech in the late 1950's, Khrushchev claimed there were no longer political prisoners in the USSR. Taking his cue, the regime's functionaries found it convenient to characterize dissent as a psychiatric problem, thereby denying any social or political basis for dissatisfaction with the government. *Pravda* explained the rationale for this policy on May 24, 1959:

> A crime is a deviation from the generally recognized standard of behavior, frequently caused by mental disorder. Can there be diseases, nervous disorders among certain people in the Communist society [of the future]? Evidently there can be. If that is so, then there will also be offenses which are characteristic of people with abnormal minds. . . . To those who might start calling for opposition to Communism on this "basis," we can say that now, too, there are people who fight against Communism . . . but clearly the mental state of such people is not normal.

Since then, the regime's cadre of doctors, led by Academician Andrei Snezhnevsky, has developed a sophisticated theory of schizophrenia. As Alexander Podrabinek makes clear in his book, *Punitive Medicine*, "In Soviet psychiatric practice, the fundamental criterion of psychiatric pathology is the lack of social adaptation." It is because of their failure to adjust adequately to the country's life that dissidents protest closed trials, labor-camp conditions, censorship, the treatment of nationalities, anti-Semitism —the whole range of abuses that inform regime policies.

Soviet psychiatrists conjure up useful diagnoses for the dissidents. Michael Kukobaka, they said, had "a mania for the reconstruction of society"; Victor Fainberg had "schizo-dissension" and "delusions of reform." Natalya Gorbanevskaya, who founded the unofficial *Chronicle of Current Events* and later participated in the Red Square demonstration against the invasion of Czechoslovakia, spent nearly two years in mental hospitals. At her trial in 1970, which she was not allowed to attend, the psychiatrist Daniil Lunts explained his diagnosis of "sluggish schizophrenia." As he told the court, Gorbanevskaya's condition was "not characterized by crude, well-defined psychotic phenomena such as delirium, hallucinations, etc. The illness takes its course without affecting fitness for work or one's former intellectual level and skills."

In *Soviet Psychoprisons,* Harvey Fireside provides a useful account of the dissidents' struggle to expose psychiatric abuse and embarrass the regime. His chapters on "Patients," "Doctors," and "Resisters" are especially suited for readers with little background on Soviet dissent. The defiance of activists like Vladimir Bukovsky, Semyon Gluzman, and Alexander Podrabi-

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nek did much to deflate the government's omnipotence.

Bukovsky collected official diagnoses and sent them to the West, hoping psychiatrists there would evaluate them and condemn the regime. Gluzman was a young psychiatrist in Kiev who offered to help Bukovsky and who also wrote a counter-diagnosis of General Pyotr Grigorenko (committed to a lunatic asylum for his views) and circulated it in *samizdat*. Gluzman was arrested and has just completed a seven-year term in a labor camp.

Podrabinek's story is the most astonishing of all. A young paramedic in Moscow, he took upon himself the responsibility of visiting psychiatric hospitals and inquiring about incarcerated dissidents. As Fireside explains, Podrabinek was "spurred by his experience of working on the Moscow ambulances transport[ing] dissenters furtively to hospitals."

Fireside describes their activity well. He has also compiled important primary material. These documents, including *A Manual on Psychiatry for Dissidents*, which Bukovsky and Gluzman wrote in a labor camp, are not easy to find, and Fireside has performed a service by making them available.

VICTOR NEKIPELEV became active in the human-rights movement in the early 1970's. A pharmacist by profession, he also wrote poetry. After a series of searches at his home and office, Nekipelev was arrested in 1973, then taken to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow where he stayed for two months. At the time there was considerable uproar in the West over Soviet abuse of psychiatry, and the doctors, ever sensitive to publicity, declared him responsible for his actions. Charged with circulating "anti-Soviet literature," including copies of his own poems, Nekipelev was convicted and spent two years in the labor colonies.

Institute of Fools, unlike the other two books under discussion, does not provide a historical or medical analysis of psychiatric abuse. Based on Nekipelev's diary of his stay in Serbsky, the book is a series of character studies and vignettes. His portraits of doctors and patients alike add human dimension to our understanding of their situation. The doctors seem bored and indifferent to their work. Criminal convicts feign mental illness in order to be declared insane. (They mistakenly believe psychiatric prisons will offer easier regimens.) Patients receive heavy doses of tranquilizers without proper medical supervision. Lumbar punctures are a common diagnostic procedure.

Nekipelev refused to cooperate with the doctors, knowing that his behavior had nothing to do with their diagnosis. When the notorious Dr. Lunts spoke with him, Nekipelev cut him short. "When I look at you," he told Lunts, "I see Leonid Plyushch's children."

After two years in a camp, Nekipelev returned to the struggle. He became a member of the Moscow Helsinki group and was especially active in defense of dissidents in

Lewis Namier and Zionism

NORMAN ROSE, Senior Lecturer and Chairman, Department of International Relations, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Lewis Namier was a man of unique gifts. Described as "the most penetrating and original and at the same time exact of all English historians," his energy and talents encompassed many other fields: business, journalism, and above all, Zionist politics. This first study of Namier's political life relates his growing awareness of the potency of modern nationalism, his gradual disillusionment with Polish nationalism tainted by anti-Semitism, and his contact with the Zionist movement. It tells also of his complicated political relationships with colleagues, political opponents and, in particular, Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader.

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Jews and Zionism

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GIDEON SHIMONI, Professor in the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In this historical study the author examines the origins of South African Jewry as an immigrant group, tracing the political development of Zionism in South Africa and its involvement in the emergence of Israel. Professor Shimoni analyzes the relationship between the Afrikaners and the Jews and the development of anti-Semitism within the Afrikaner national movement in the 1930s and 1940s. The book also examines the political relations between Israel and South Africa and, in particular, the deterioration of these relations between 1961 and 1967.

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mental hospitals. His appeals—several of which circulated widely in *samizdat*—form an appendix to this volume. Nekipelev prepared *Institute of Fools* during this period and also applied to emigrate. But he was caught up in the recent crackdown on dissent and arrested in December 1979. His trial this June ended predictably: Nekipelev received seven years of imprisonment plus five years of "internal exile."

THE story behind *Punitive Medicine* rivals the book itself. Alexander Podrabinek began compiling material in 1973. He worked quietly on his own. Only in November 1976, when he first visited a mental hospital, did he become a conspicuous figure. By January he had helped to organize the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, a body attached to the Moscow Helsinki group. Its members adopted Podrabinek's forthright style. They visited hospitals, introducing themselves as members of the Working Commission and inquiring about individual prisoners. They wrote appeals on group stationery to hospital doctors, alerting them to their concern. Sometimes the doctors thought they represented an official organization and hastily released patients. Using the Helsinki Accords, Podrabinek and his colleagues were able to marshal grassroots resistance to the "cops in white coats."

In March 1977, the KGB searched Podrabinek's apartment. The manuscript of *Punitive Medicine* was taken as well as his file on more than two hundred political inmates of mental hospitals. Nonetheless, Podrabinek continued his work. He compiled his manuscript once again and managed to send it to the West before he himself was arrested in May 1978.

Punitive Medicine is the most comprehensive study of psychiatric abuse to come out of the Soviet Union. Podrabinek has done more than collect anecdotal evidence of dishonest diagnosis and treatment. Under the most difficult circumstances, he has pieced together legal, medical, and historical analysis of the practice, providing new and use-

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THE AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENT

Leonard Silk and Mark Silk

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ful details of how the authorities carry out compulsory incarceration.

Podrabinek's research, the efforts of Bukovsky and Gluzman, and the testimony of Victor Nekipelev provide overwhelming evidence of the cruel and cynical use of psychiatry by Soviet authorities. All the dissidents understand the cunning of incarceration in hospitals. As Podrabinek remarks, "You cannot defend yourself because you were pronounced insane; you cannot lodge a formal protest with the authorities because you were not arrested; you cannot appeal because you were not sentenced."

At his trial in August 1978, after three months in jail, Podrabinek was accused of "anti-Soviet slander." He asked for extensive material evidence and for witnesses who could confirm his innocence. The court rejected all his requests, whereupon Podrabinek demanded to be removed, declaring "I have no artistic talent and therefore shall not take part in this show, even as an extra." When the court tried to ignore this request as well, Podrabinek smoked and whistled until the authorities were obliged to remove him. He was convicted in absentia and sentenced "only" to five years of internal exile. In June of this year he was rearrested at his place of exile in northeastern Siberia and charged with "anti-Soviet slander." *Punitive Medicine* is a monument to Podrabinek's courage and sacrifice.

After Prince Charming

OF KENNEDYS AND KINGS: MAKING SENSE OF THE SIXTIES. By HARRIS WOFFORD. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 504 pp. $17.50.*

Reviewed by HERMAN BELZ

WITH the exception of his indefatigable apologist Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historians have been much harsher toward President John F. Kennedy than pundits and journalists were during and immediately after his brief administration. With the perspective that events in the next decade provided—a perspective that reflected the leftward shift of American intellectual life in those years—historians came to criticize Kennedy for lack of commitment in the civil-rights struggle, for strengthening American defense and cold-war postures vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, and for a willingness to use military force in the pursuit of American foreign policy. Kennedy's promise to "pay any price" in "defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger," his advice to Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country," in retrospect took on ominous significance. By contrast, the Eisenhower interregnum (John Foster Dulles's rhetoric notwithstanding) ironically began to appear more attractive.

Is it conceivable that, in yet another turn of the spiral, former New Frontiersmen or liberal Democratic historians will, if not defend, then at least come to acknowledge sympathetically Kennedy's role in maintaining the policy of containment that the United States had pursued since the start of the cold war? If this book by Harris Wofford, a special assistant in the Kennedy White House and long-time liberal idealist, is any indication, the prospect does not seem likely. Wofford believes that the revisionist critique of the Kennedys, while to some extent warranted, has gone too far and produced a cynicism about government that has paralyzed American politics. What this really seems to mean, however, is that critics have connected the first half of the decade—the short reign of Kennedy as a liberal Prince Charming—with the disastrous events of the second half. Rejecting such an ungenerous interpretation, Wofford in this memoir-history asserts that John and Robert Kennedy were not principally cold warriors, and argues that their search for world peace went farther than present-day liberals think.

Wofford writes most knowledgably about civil-rights policy (he was legal counsel to the Civil Rights Commission in 1958-59 and then special assistant to the Presi-

HERMAN BELZ, *who teaches constitutional history at the University of Maryland, has been awarded a Guggenheim fellowship for 1981.*

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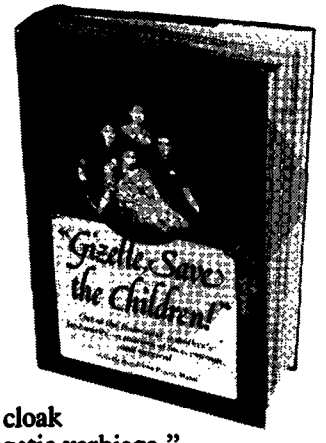

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dent on civil rights in the first year of the Kennedy administration). He takes issue both with the view that Kennedy felt no urgency in regard to civil rights and with the argument (advanced by Schlesinger and Theodore Sorensen) that the President was deeply committed from the first to the cause of black equality. After reviewing the events that led in 1963 to Kennedy's long-awaited admission that civil rights was a moral issue, and the introduction into Congress of major civil-rights legislation, Wofford says that Kennedy was probably right to adopt a cautious attitude and let matters ripen as they did. He at once defends Kennedy for having raised black expectations in the campaign of 1960 and then, in the tradition of Kennedy hagiography, praises him for experiencing the personal growth that enabled him by 1963 to perceive the dimensions of the issue. Kennedy, Wofford writes, "was an extraordinary politician and learned through politics in the best American tradition of learning by doing."

Although Wofford's ties to Martin Luther King enabled him to serve usefully as liaison between the Kennedy administration and black leaders, the work he performed appears to have offended his liberal sensibilities. (He grew tired, he tells us, of Kennedy's asking with a grin how his constituents were.) In any event, ever since his youthful days as a United World Federalist, Wofford's heart was really in foreign affairs. In the 1950's he had been an assistant to Chester Bowles in the effort to redirect American foreign policy away from reliance on military power and toward an emphasis on economic aid to underdeveloped countries. It was appropriate therefore that Wofford should in 1962 become deputy director of the Peace Corps.

Like other Kennedy apologists, Wofford is given to judging the New Frontier more by its intentions than by its results. In the case of the Peace Corps perhaps that is all one can do, but Wofford's account is nevertheless a little startling. Whereas seemingly the whole world regarded this missionary-like undertaking as an aspect of U.S. cold-war policy, Wofford saw it—and persists in seeing it—as pointing in the opposite direction. It was, he writes, a genuine experiment in international partnership, an attempt to achieve world peace and show the peoples of the world that we were interested in them for their own sake rather than for any function they might serve in countering Communism. At the same time, Wofford also says that one of the purposes of the Peace Corps was to contribute to the development of "critical countries and regions." He does not explain in what sense certain countries were critical, but in the context of the East-West struggle the plain meaning would seem to be that they were important to U.S. security.

Wofford was attracted to Kennedy initially because he thought he would depart from the contain-

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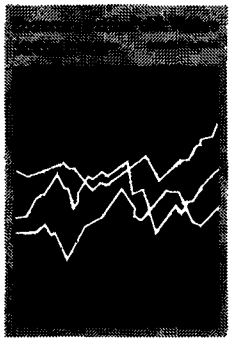

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Financial and Economic History of the United States, 1914-1946

By Benjamin M. Anderson

"In the direct handling of economic life, governments are usually clumsy and ineffective. In economic life their main business should be that of a traffic cop, not that of a driver, and above all not that of a back-seat driver," says the author of this insightful history. The wisdom of his viewpoint is confirmed by Dr. Anderson's careful account of American financial and economic events beginning before World War I and ending with the Bretton Woods Conference after World War II.

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ment policy of Truman and Acheson and move in the direction of conciliation urged by Bowles and other liberals in the 1950's. Within months of the new Democratic President's inauguration, however, cold-war hostilities increased and were accompanied by threats of military force. The Bay of Pigs, the Berlin crisis, the Cuban missile crisis, the deepening involvement in Indochina, covert planning to assassinate leaders of foreign countries: these events require Wofford to explain in retrospect how the man whose election seemed to augur the advent of peace and rationality in foreign policy could have steered the country so precipitately toward confrontation and have left the legacy of war that he did at the time of his death.

Wofford's answer is twofold. First, after years of having been charged with "softness" toward Communism, the defense, foreign-policy, and intelligence establishments, all now in the hands of Democrats, became possessed of "the military mind." Second, Kennedy himself, for all his energy, wit, and intelligence, lacked in Wofford's view a basic moral reference point. He had no "genuine sense of conviction about what is right and wrong." Bored with and indifferent to moral and legal considerations in foreign policy, Kennedy operated on the basis of a thoroughgoing pragmatism that in conjunction with his competitive instinct and his fear of being seen as soft, led him to undertake one military adventure after another.

WHAT one sees first of all in Wofford's account is a failure to acknowledge that anti-Communism could be seriously supported by Kennedy or anyone else for sound and objective reasons, both moral and political. In this respect Wofford is of course typical—indeed he appears as a progenitor—of the "new-politics" wing of the Democratic party that came to power in the aftermath of the Vietnam war and that now dominates the foreign-policy establishment. The reason for this unwillingness or inability to recognize the legitimacy of anti-Communism constitutes a major and inadequately understood problem in contemporary political analysis. The beginning of an answer, however, would seem to lie in the class outlook of people like Wofford, who refuse to accept the intellectual premise of anti-Communism because it means accepting middle-class values and bourgeois liberties as fundamental to American political culture.

In contrast to earlier apologists for the New Frontier, Wofford should be given credit for at least acknowledging that Kennedy must figure in an account of the events that darkened the latter half of the 1960's. Yet he perceives Kennedy merely in personal terms, as a leader whose actions were flawed by a "false pragmatism" and a lack of moral principle. In fact, Kennedyism involved far more than the personal qualities of John F. Kennedy. It was in essence a political style and method of rule that calculatingly raised the keenest expectations of what politics and government could accomplish, and then traded on the people's willingness, under the tutelage of the mass-communications media, to support their national leaders in crisis after crisis after crisis.

Wofford, without seeing it for what is was, participated in and contributed to this method of rule under John Kennedy, and in 1968 was ready—indeed fervently so—to participate in it again under Robert Kennedy. This time, however, in contrast to the noble if still somewhat ambivalent adventure that the New Frontier had promised, Wofford was *certain* that with a Kennedy in the White House things would be different and the U.S. would at last chart a new course in world affairs. For Robert Kennedy, having grown into virtually a whole new being as a result of the tragic events of his brother's administration, committed himself —after Eugene McCarthy knocked Lyndon Johnson out of the presidential race—to reason, restraint, and peace in foreign policy. Unlike his brother, Robert Kennedy finally acquired "the courage to appear soft." And with this courage, Wofford tells us, Robert Kennedy set out "to save the soul of the nation." Such an undertaking, of course, appealed to Wofford, who had long thought the country in need of redemption and who did his part by ending up in jail during the Democratic convention in 1968 because, as he unctuously explains, of "Bob Kennedy, John Kennedy, and Martin Luther King."

HERE as at other places Wofford's account would be merely risible were it not so disturbingly serious. For this frequently trivial yet revealing book presents evidence of a political temperament that we have by no means seen the last of. Here is one of the original "best and brightest," a humanitarian liberal if there ever was one, the sort who is eager to condemn government power and uphold liberty and justice for all, propounding with enthusiasm the idea that a politician might save the nation's soul, and showing not the slightest qualm that the mission of salvation might produce a dangerous concentration of power.

If not an entirely fair comparison, it is nevertheless instructive that in the riot-torn 1830's Lincoln urged Americans to strengthen the republic by making obedience to the Constitution and laws the political religion of the nation. It is a measure of the decline in civic virtue that in the riot-torn 1960's the country's governing establishment, as portrayed in Wofford's book, in effect condoned civil disobedience and, making a religion out of politics, looked to messianic leaders like the Kennedys for salvation. In the 1970's, through no intention of their own, Nixon and McGovern in different ways interrupted this pattern of chiliastic politics, and it may now be (as the defeat of Edward Kennedy in the 1980 primaries would suggest) that a healthy sense of skepticism and limitation has been restored in American politics. One certainly hopes so, but it is far too early to say whether the tendencies reflected in Wofford's account have spent themselves.

In any event, this attempt to explain the 1960's provides an occasion for reconsidering the historical origins of perhaps the central constitutional issue in American politics in the late 20th century, the aggrandizement of power in the quest for political salvation.

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